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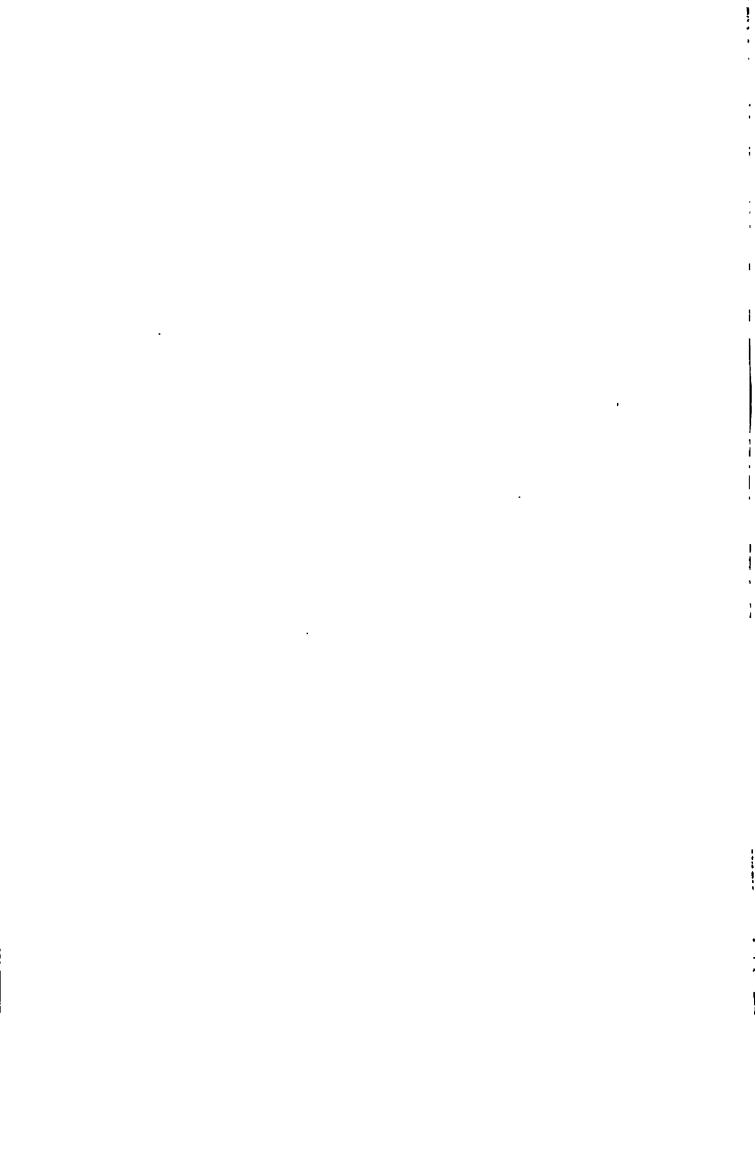
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SPIRITUAL STUDIES IN ST. JOHN'S GOSPEL

VOLUME V.

CXV

"Then cometh He to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto Him, Lord, dost Thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto Him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."—St. John xiii. 6-8.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom paraphrases St. Peter's words thus: "With those hands, he saith, with which Thou hast opened eyes, and cleansed lepers, and raised the dead? For this question is very emphatic; wherefore he needed not to have said any more than the Thou; for even of itself this would have sufficed to convey the whole. Some one might reasonably inquire, how none of the others forbid Him, but Peter only, which was a mark of no slight love and reverence. What then is the cause? He

seemeth to me to have washed the traitor first, then to have come to Peter, and that the others were afterwards instructed from his case. That He washed some one other before him is clear from the saying, *But when He came to Peter.*"

Isaac Williams says: "May we not understand the saying, *What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter*, in either of three senses?—this thou shalt know hereafter, when I explain it to you by and by, to night; or by the teaching of the Spirit in Christ's kingdom; or the fulness of this wisdom contained in this lesson thou canst only know hereafter in heaven. And St. Chrysostom indeed proceeds to imply that such mysterious doctrine is contained in the practical lesson, "When thou shalt cast out evil spirits in my name, and shalt see me carried up into heaven, and shalt be taught by the Spirit that I sit at the Right Hand, then shalt thou understand what now hath been done." From which it seems that Chrysostom supposed the action to have something in it peculiar to the Apostles as preparatory to their apostolical or sacerdotal office, independently of the general instruction."

Stier points out that, "Peter is here, if we would see the great meaning of the whole, a type of man generally, as he revolts against the eternal love which offers itself in the re-

deeming death of Christ. For thy sake, O sinner, I have laid by the garment of my glory, have girded myself with the napkin of the flesh, to pour out my Blood as a cleansing bath for thee—as thy God and thy servant. But alas, in man's refusal, This is unworthy of God, this cannot be, there too often lies the still worse undertone—from which Peter however was utterly free—*Nor is this at all needful.*”

And the same writer further says: “The meek and gentle Lord, however, does not by the slightest word rebuke the impatience of Peter, who would not wait for the knowledge the hereafter should bring. The single, *Thou knowest not now*, was sufficient rebuke, and at the same time it utters a promise to supply that deficiency of knowledge which is thereby rather excused. The antithesis between now and hereafter, shows that the most obvious meaning must be referred to the repelled washing—As soon as I have done it unto all, thou shalt know with the rest what my act signifies. And truly, without the words which now accompany, and afterwards follow, the act, we should none of us understand the meaning of what He did; we might discern in it the example of humility, but scarcely the manifold mystery of the profound symbol. For wide and deep is this mystery; and therefore the Saviour begins the

preliminary solution of it by a word which, as the commencement of that solution, has a universal import. What I do—first, this washing of your feet; then the washing generally thereby denoted, finally all His work in us, in so far as it centres in and belongs in this, that He washes us from sin. Who understood the work of His atoning passion when and while it was accomplished? And how wide does this hereafter reach for His Church and the world, in which the counsels of God in the humiliations of Christ are from age to age ever becoming more profoundly and fully disclosed. So also the last application of this word, that by which the Holy Spirit so often uses it for humbling our resistance and consoling our apprehensions, is perfectly well grounded. It is in its widest extent an utterance concerning all the acts of God, which will never be fully understood till hereafter: the eternal majesty speaks in this lowest abasement of the Son, and speaks with reference to all the future acts of His government from this present action onwards. It is enough for us that He shows us and gives us to feel no more than this—I do it: we may confidently resign ourselves to His hand. We shall hereafter know that, and in what way, all was done for our purification; we shall in eternity look back upon the whole process of His guid-

ing and cleansing our souls; and merge all in that cry—Thou hast washed us from our sins, and therefore didst Thou obediently abase Thyself to our feet.”

First Thought.—It is ever the experience of the believer that one of the most trying things in life is not to be permitted to know the meaning of one's circumstances as ordered for one by God. Things are so perplexing, apparently so perverse at times; we seem to be hindered and thwarted at every turn when our desires are the purest and our aspirations the most unselfish. Why is it that when we want so much to do for God we are not permitted, while others who care not at all as we do, are given opportunity of the most glorious service? The way of temporal circumstance seems almost always to be one which forbids the sort of service our hearts yearn to render. Our temptations are so persistent and baffling that they succeed in effectually thwarting every good endeavour with which we start out; and often it seems true that when we feel the supremest need of grace, and are most desirous to avail ourselves of it, the means of grace are withdrawn from us. In reply to our querulous interrogations our Lord replies, “What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter.” Who has not

many times found that to be true as he has advanced in life, and turned to look back upon crises through which he has passed in by-gone years? It is especially the prerogative of old age, when the ability to do has largely gone, to look back and muse upon the past. Many wise ones in life's decline have assured us that they have then been able to understand, and have come to bless God for, things they rebelled against most fiercely when the burden was first laid upon them.

There is reason to believe that in the interval which elapses between the passing of the soul, and its arraignment at the bar of our Lord, every circumstance of its earthly experience flashes before it in memory. If it be so, then everything must be manifest as having been planned by God for the believer with the one thought of his salvation. And if we come to the land of the blest at last, it is certain that we shall thank our Lord in all eternity for having ordered our lives here upon earth just as He has. Then we shall see plainly that if they had not been so ordered for us we must have been lost in hell.

They are wise therefore who often pause and go back in thought over the past, seeking to understand why they have been led on hitherto just as they have. Devout ones who do this

never fail to perceive the loving hand of the heavenly Father in their life's record, and to thank Him for His mercy.

Second Thought.—It is very hard for poor human nature to realize that it cannot be saved without soul-washing, but harder still to grasp the truth that there is no cleansing agency in all the world for the soul save the precious Blood of our Lord. We do not like to admit that we are so hopelessly enslaved to sin that nothing short of His death upon the cross can redeem us. For the thought of His death always involves the cross, and we would get away from that. Yet He says very unmistakably, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me."

1. Just because He would not leave us in the dire plight of our original sinfulness, as vessels of wrath, He caused us to be brought to Him in our infancy, though we had done nought to merit His love, and washed us wholly clean at the font. One must surely after that ever remain in happy fellowship with HIM.

2. Yet alas, how quickly did we all lapse from our baptismal purity just as soon as years of discretion enabled us to forsake the light and to pursue the evil! Why did God not cast us off after our first mortal sin, and call into being new souls in our stead which should not thus

abuse His goodness? Only because He loves His own and will not lightly suffer them to be separated from Him. It was of His unutterable love for poor sinners that He provided the sacrament of Penance, storing that fountain of pardon with boundless wealth of His most precious Blood, by which alone souls may be washed clean. One might well look to see the whole Christian world eagerly thronging the confessionals of the Church, as wretched pilgrims flock to Lourdes or other famous shrines for bodily healing—but how many do? Is He not still crying to all such as hold back, “If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me”?

Third Thought.—What is it, furthermore, to have part with Him?

1. First, to have a conscience clear of sin. O the blessedness of having confessed the full tale of one’s misdoings and to have received God’s absolution for them; thus to keep one’s self in the state of grace.

2. Again, to have the conviction in one’s soul of absolute and fearless dependence upon the Master so that no danger can terrify, no enemy daunt one.

3. Yet further to be conscious that a divine spring of vital force is ever flowing into one’s being through every communion which one re-

ceives with penitence, faith, and charity; a vital force which cannot be exhausted, but ever builds up its happy receivers more and more into the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.

4. Finally, as the result of all these, to have ever present in one's consciousness the joyousness of a great hope, growing more and more into spiritual vision, of the good things which lie before one; a possession into which one shall surely enter in the day of his passing from this world.

CXVI.

"Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith unto him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For He knew who should betray Him; therefore said He, Ye are not all clean."—St. John xiii. 9-11.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "The Lord saith it, the Truth speaketh it, that one needeth to wash his feet, even he that is washed. What should it be, my brethren, what think ye? but that the man in holy Baptism indeed is washed every whit, not except the feet, but the whole man altogether: yet, seeing thereafter one has to live in the midst of human affairs, of course one treads upon the earth. Therefore our human affections themselves, without which in this mortal state we cannot live, are as the feet wherein we are affected by human affairs, and so affected that *if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.* Every day therefore He washeth our feet, Who intercedeth for us; and that we

do every day need to wash our feet, that is, to direct the ways of our spiritual steps, we confess also in the Lord's prayer, when we say, *Forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors.* For if, as it is written, *we confess our sins*, doubtless He, Who washed the feet of His disciples, is *faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness*, that is, even to the feet, wherewith we move to and fro on earth. . . . As for those who tarry here, albeit in them the Church be clean because they live righteously, yet they have need to wash their feet, because without sin in any wise they are not."

St. Bernard says: "He is washed who has no grievous sins, whose head, that is, his intention, and his hands, that is, his work and conversation, are clean; but his feet, which are the affections of the soul, whilst they walk in this dust, cannot be wholly clean, forasmuch as the soul yields to vanity, to pleasure, to curiosity, more than it ought, according to the saying, *In many things we offend all.*"

Isaac Williams comments thus: "It is difficult to understand these words. Does it mean that this typical action of washing their feet was equivalent to entire washing? And does our Lord mercifully intend it for those of His Church hereafter who should not be able to ob-

tain entire washing in Baptism that the spiritual washing was sufficiently obtained? But St. Augustine says: This expression proves that they were already baptized in Christ's passion. Bede also, expressing not his own sentiments, but those of St. Augustine: This washing of the feet signifies not that of Baptism, but that daily washing which we all require for our daily offences after Baptism; for the dust of this world ever cleaves to our feet, as we proceed along our path through it; and this washing of our feet is by the Lord's prayer, in which we pray for the forgiveness of our trespasses. And he that is thus washed needeth not save to wash his feet, for he has been washed once for all in Baptism, for the remission of sins. But he needeth not, nay he cannot have, the same repeated. But for his daily failings he needeth still daily forgiveness of his Lord, the washing of his feet from the dust. Such is the case with the Apostle, and such as they. But for those who, forgetful of fear, proceed on the left-hand road, much more than their daily washing is needed. Greater pollution needeth greater cleansing of prayers, and fastings, of tears, and alms."

Stier says: "The feet signify generally the flesh which still connects us with the earth, and through which we are ever susceptible of sin,

even while the head may look towards heaven, the heart be heavenly-minded, and the hands, by which we perform our Christian duty, be to the utmost of our knowledge and will undefiled. . . . It is of the utmost importance that we learn never lightly to esteem this ever necessary cleansing. On the one hand, the consciousness that we have once been washed throughout and made clean should not be extinguished in despondency; and on the other, we should ever remember, for our security against false confidence, that our feet need washing. . . . There is one among you, says the Lord, whom I have externally washed, but that avails him nothing. Let it be carefully observed that, on the one hand, the Lord does not in His gentleness point out the traitor for general opprobrium; and on the other, how earnestly He makes him the basis of an indefinite general warning. This warning should resound in the midst of the narrowest circle of disciples."

Bengel reminds us that, "The word translated washed means bathed, while that translated wash applies rather to the washing of a part of the body. Hence the meaning is, He that has bathed the whole body, needeth not afterwards to wash more than his feet, on which he has walked from the bath home, and is clean. This is the outward sense; but the whole is pro-

verbial: and the especial lesson here, beyond that of humility and brotherly love, seems to be their daily need of cleansing at Christ's hands, even after spiritual regeneration."

First Thought.—The blessed Apostles had been washed; though the fact is not recorded they must have been already baptized, and they now remained with our Lord as His cleansed ones, that is, in the state of grace. For after one has been bathed in the font, the power of the divine grace enables him to continue in the way of salvation till by grievous mortal sin, he forfeit the presence of the Holy Ghost within his soul. Our Lord would teach us that such a one has still need of the washing of the feet, that is, of constant daily cleansing from the effects of his natural inclination to sensuality, covetousness, and pride; but ought to need nothing more than this. The Apostles doubtless were daily purified by their very contact with the Master Himself. He was ever watching over them; even as some tender and wise parent of this world, ever solicitous for the spiritual well-being of his children. The Master's gentle rebukes and touching admonitions kept the hearts of His disciples continually full of a great enthusiasm for Him, and a great com-

punction when they felt themselves to have transgressed in the least degree.

So too we, who have received regeneration at the font, the sevenfold armor of the Spirit in Confirmation, who are regularly nourished by Holy Communion, ought without failure to continue in the state of grace; there is no good reason why any believer should lapse from his baptismal purity. That is not to say, however, that we are already saints. We are naturally very weak, and we do not avail ourselves so heartily as we ought of those divine helps which are well able to counteract all our weakness; therefore we are constantly guilty of venial sin, that is, of thoughtless, unpremeditated words and deeds, unbecoming our Christian profession. It is most true that we are pardoned for these less grievous lapses through the devout daily recital of the Lord's prayer, *if we ourselves forgive others*, and through the public confession of our transgressions, made with the rest of the congregation in the church. Thus are our feet washed from day to day by our Lord, and we are kept clean, that is, in the state of grace.

Yet because one cannot always be sure that deeds which might be only venial sins in others are not in one's own case mortal, since one has very many opportunities of knowledge vouchsafed him, and of partaking of the divine grace,

which others have not; he is wise to avail himself at regular intervals of the sacrament of Penance also, lest the very dust of venial sin, through being long unheeded, accumulate to the measure of mortal transgression.

Second Thought.—One cannot but feel the beauty and the force of the Master's word, that he who has once been bathed, and afterwards washed his feet, is clean every whit; altogether clean. But who is like that in this world? We have all of us been bathed at the Font; some of us are very heedful of our confessions, using the sacrament of Penance as carefully and thoroughly as we know how, yet we are conscious that we are very far from being wholly clean. Many evil thoughts still lurk in our souls, pleading with our wills for toleration; many unworthy motives sway our actions—how can we be clean through and through? We may believe that our Lord is speaking of us only so far as freedom from guilt is concerned. If we faithfully use the sacramental helps which He has provided for us, and persistently struggle against our besetting temptations and the evil thoughts which we are unable to banish from our minds, He holds us guiltless of disloyalty to Himself, putting away our transgressions wholly through His own infinite merits. That

our nature remains yet unsanctified is no difficulty to Him. In His own perfect way He goes on to cleanse it more and more, through the operation of His grace, and the chastisements of His discipline while we remain here in this world. When we have borne our part in the cleansing work, through patient co-operation in all His gracious up-building, and all His fatherly chastisement, it is not hard for Him to perfect us through and through in the blessed fires of purgatory.

Third Thought.—Very solemn is the warning of our Lord to the disciples who suspected not the treachery of Judas; "Ye are clean, but not all." The traitor had been long time in the company of the devout, sharing in all their privileges, basking in the sunshine of the Master's presence. Very likely he was self-deceived at first, he did not realize that he was not faithful. After his sinfulness dawned upon him, he went on among the blessed, knowing that he was false at heart, yet, doubtless, for a while at least, insisting to himself that he was no hypocrite, but only that he had a different standard of duty from that taught by the Master. It is easy for us to deceive ourselves, to fancy that because we are devout in prayer and zealous of good works, our heart-sins do

not matter much. Even after we have reached the consciousness that our Lord's standard of right and duty is not that which we acknowledge and are trying to live by, we would persuade ourselves that we are not disobedient to conscience. When one reaches that point he is not far from the state of Judas. To admit to ourselves that our way is not Christ's way, and yet to be content with it, is to have forfeited all of that cleansing which the divine grace has hitherto wrought in us.

CXVII.

"So after He had washed their feet, and had taken His garments, and was set down again, He said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you."—St. John xiii. 12-15.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: "It is not the same thing, for He is Lord and Master, but ye are fellow-servants, one of another. What meaneth then the as? With the same zeal. For on this account He taketh instances from greater actions that we may, if so be, perform the less. Thus schoolmasters write the letters for children very beautifully, that they may come to imitate them though but in an inferior manner. Where now are they who spit on their fellow-servants? where now they who demand honours? Christ washed the feet of the traitor, the sacrilegious, the thief, and that close to the time of the betrayal, and incurable as he was,

made him a partaker of His table; and art thou high-minded, and dost thou draw up thine eyebrows? Let us then wash one another's feet, saith some one, then we must wash those of our domestics. And what great thing if we do wash even those of our domestics? In our case slave and free is a difference of words; but there an actual reality. For by nature He was Lord and we servants, yet even this He refused not at this time to do."

And St. Augustine: "Can we say that it shall be even possible for brother to cleanse brother from the contagion of sin? Nay; but let us know that we are taught this lesson also, in the depth of meaning which is in this action of the Lord, that, having confessed our sins one to another, we should pray each for other, even as Christ maketh intercession for us. Hear we the Apostle James most manifestly enjoining this, and saying, *Confess your sins one to another, and pray each for other*. Because hereunto also hath the Lord given us an example. For if He Who neither hath, nor had, nor will have, any sin, prayeth for our sins, how much more ought we to pray for our sins, each for other? And if He forgiveth our sins, Whom we have nothing to forgive, how much more ought we to forgive each other, who cannot live here without sin? Let us then for-

give one another his sins, and for our sins pray one for another, and so in some sort wash one another's feet."

Isaac Williams comments as follows: "We do not consider this precept to be taken as if the action was a sacramental rite to be necessarily observed by every Church, because all Churches have not so received it from the beginning. Nor indeed is the literal performance of the action to be considered requisite as a religious duty, although the principle is binding to the very fullest extent, which St. Chrysostom eloquently dwells upon. And Origen, although he thinks it would be ridiculous to stand on the mere literal fulfilment only, yet he alludes to it as to the requisite which St. Paul mentions, as one of the things which characterize the widow who is fit to be received into the Church society, that she should have washed the saints' feet. But many old writers do greatly commend the literal performance of it, as St. Augustine does. 'Wherever,' says he, 'this practice exists not among the saints, they do in heart what they do not by the hand, if they are of the number of those spoken of in the hymn as *O ye holy and humble men of heart*. But it is much better, and without controversy the more true fulfilment, that it should be done by the

hands also; nor let a Christian disdain to do what Christ hath done.' ”

Stier also: “First, and in general, we should, in the most internal humility, after the pattern of our Lord’s humility, never be too lofty or too prudent to perform acts of service to our neighbour. Secondly, we should, as brothers in Christ, be affectionately and mutually helpful in cleansing one another from the sins which still adhere to us, and to that end be ever humbly disposed to stoop down to our brother’s soiled feet.”

First Thought. “Know ye what I have done to you?” is a question of our Lord’s which we ought constantly to hear Him putting to us. Whenever we look upon the cross, that question should be uppermost in our minds. We behold Him figured in wood or stone or metal, as He died for us, and we ought to hear His voice addressing us in the words “Know ye what I have done to you?” We know that upon the cross He did much more than pay the eternal penalty of the transgressions of the world, in order that whosoever would but avail himself of that bounteous deed of redemption might be forever freed from hell. He did indeed provide for our bathing through His precious Blood-shedding, that regeneration might be

ours, and the fulness of the blessings of the Font. But He failed not also to make fullest provision for the continual washing of our feet in the loving prodigality of His Blood-shedding.

1. In every absolution of venial sin which comes to us through devout recitation of the Lord's prayer—if it be but accompanied by charity towards all our fellows on our part—we find our answer to that inquiry, "Know ye what I have done to you?" In every public absolution, in the blessing of which we have part with the rest of God's people, the same inquiry is answered. In all our intercourse as loyal disciples with our gracious Master the words must be ever recurring, for we know that the fullest wealth of the good things which flow to us from that intercourse is the fruit of His unsparing doing to us.

2. Yet more heart-moving is the fact that in the confessional He has provided for the unstinted washing away of even mortal sins, into which His people unhappily too often fall. It were sufficiently amazing did He grant grace for two or three returns of ungrateful backsliders, once washed clean at the font; but what shall we think of being permitted thus to seek His pardon countless times, during all the years of a long life; and never being refused

it, if we but come as genuine penitents? Do we indeed know what He has done to us?

3. Beyond our power to conceive is the wonder of that washing of our feet which yet awaits us in purgatory. His goodness is not exhausted by all our failures to continue in holiness despite our baptism, our many Eucharists, our frequent confessions. On the cross He endured temporal penalty for us sufficient even to furnish purgatory thoroughly for the fulness of the gracious service it must render our unworthy souls, when at last they find shelter there from everlasting woe. Therefore the devout soul should not cease to call to mind day by day the inquiry of the Master "Know ye what I have done to you?" and to praise Him for His inexhaustible mercy.

Second Thought.—In our times of earnestness, in the ecstasy of prayer and worship, or when we are conscious of some great and unlooked-for mercy extended to us, we delight to invoke the gracious Christ as our Master and our Lord. Doubtless He loves to have us so address Him if we are indeed sincere of heart in our discipleship. But we are not to forget that Judas also called him "Master," as he gave Him the kiss of treachery; and He Himself tells us that lost ones, in the day of their

judgment, as those foolish virgins who took no oil in their vessels with their lamps, and those self-deceived workers who had preached, and cast out devils, and done miracles in His name, will call on Him, saying "Lord, Lord," though He knows them not. We say well when we address Him as Master and Lord, for He would be to us all that those names imply; yet it is certain we shall address Him also in vain if we seek not quite loyally to follow His example. Many a Christian life makes shipwreck upon that rock of the imitation of Christ. We are zealous enough in prayer and worship, full of such good works as appeal to us, and yet utterly at fault in the matter of patterning our inner lives upon the life of our Master. "I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you." It is probably true that more believers will be lost in hell through failure in Christ-like behaviour towards their fellow-believers than for any other reason.

Third Thought.—How would the Master have us imitate Him in washing one another's feet?

1. Most simply, in the first place, by loving ministrations of mercy to poor and afflicted ones, especially those who from whatsoever cause are repulsive, and whose cases call for the greatest self-sacrifice on our part. The Church glories

in her records of the ministrations of thousands of her devoted ones in pesthouses, to lepers, and in times of plague. Every true follower of Christ ought to be ready to minister lovingly to the most loathsome outcast should occasion arise for such ministration on his part.

2. In the second place, we are to wash one another's feet by tireless patience in seeking to win souls to Christ, no matter what rebuffs we may meet, no matter how hopeless any case may appear. We are to grow weary neither of effort nor of prayer for the salvation of those whom we might reach.

3. Again, we are to wash one another's feet by our prompt and hearty forgiveness of all wrongs done against us; a forgiveness patterned after that of our Lord upon the cross. For He would not think of Himself at all; He had no pride to consider; He insisted upon no rights of His own; but as a slave who is devotedly attached to his master bears without resentment even blows and curses from that master, so did our Lord in His passion submit Himself to all the malice and insults of His enemies, with never the smallest thought of resentment in His heart, but only a vast and unconquerable love for them. That love made Him find excuse for their unheard-of deed—they knew not what

they did. When do we ever so pass judgment upon those who cruelly and wantonly wrong us? Then did the Master go on to endure patiently and gladly all the pains which their sins deserved. Have we ever consciously endured pain and shame which belonged to others, yet had been by them wickedly thrust upon us; and have counted ourselves happy that we could by thus willingly bearing their sin wash their feet? It is what our Master did.

CXVIII.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither is he that is sent greater than He That sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them."—St. John xiii. 16, 17.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "We cannot but recognize in these words the same appeal which is expressed in some words which St. Luke records, as taking place at this supper, and apparently in allusion to this circumstance, *Who is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? but I am among you as he that serveth.* And as we find that our Lord so often taught by significant action, it may have been that the immediate cause of this action, of washing the disciples' feet, was in consequence of that desire of precedency, which He still observed in the hearts of the disciples, which we soon afterwards find them expressing at this very supper. The first and great lesson to us all contained in this action, we may suppose to be humility; and next, that the great mystery

was contained in it, of our all being washed in the Blood of Christ, which the disciples then knew not, but were soon to know, which rendered this humility so essential on our part. . . . Some suppose it to intimate that repentance and absolution which are necessary before partaking of the Holy Eucharist; and the occasion seems strongly to support this inference. . . . It has been suggested that this action of our Lord's corresponded to the lustrations in the Law, which took place before the consecration of priests, that it was peculiar in its application to the Apostles before they were consecrated by Christ, in order that they might have part with Him in His everlasting priesthood; and limited therefore to them and their successors in the ministry in its significance. Origen too applies it more particularly to the Apostles. He adds in a vein of expressive poetry, 'When Jesus washed the feet of His disciples, then, I suppose, was fulfilled that which had been prophesied concerning His Apostles: *How beautiful are the feet of them that bring glad tidings of good things.* But if by washing the feet of disciples He maketh them beautiful, what shall we say of that true beauty which is in them who are all over baptized by Jesus with the Holy Ghost and with fire?' Beautiful were the feet of those which preach the Gospel of good

things, when washed, and purified, and wiped clean by the hands of Christ, they were able to enter upon the holy way, and proceed along that way, which is He That hath said, I am the Way. For no one but he alone who hath his feet washed by Jesus, goeth along this way, the living way, which leadeth unto the Father. For this way receiveth not feet that are defiled, and which are not yet cleansed. Moses, indeed, had need to loose the sandals from his feet, since the spot where he had come, and on which he stood, was holy ground. And so likewise Joshua, the son of Nun. But the disciples of Jesus, that they may proceed along this living and spiritual way, not only require to have no shoes for the way (which Jesus commanded His Apostles), but in order that they may proceed along this road, require also that Jesus should wash their feet."

Sadler well says: "Notice how the Lord here assumes the essential separation between knowledge and obedience unless united by grace. They are in two different spheres: the one in that of the intellect, the other in that of the will."

And Lange: "Well did the Lord foresee the great temptations and errors connected with clerical self-upliftment in His Church."

Stier comments as follows: "What the Lord

had already said in St. Matthew and St. Luke, and repeats with another application in St. John, has here obviously the simple, proverbially striking, meaning that the servant and messenger should not deem himself too high to perform any service which his Lord Who sent him had previously performed. Thus is struck down every lofty feeling which would say, Should I abase myself so low as to wash the feet of such a one? That would not be becoming in me. For this the Lord substitutes, Should I be lofty enough to dare to refuse such a service? Would that be becoming in me? . . . There is too often a great gulf fixed, not only between the knowing what we should do and the actual performance of it—but also between the knowing that we are not greater than our Lord, and the actual conduct of our heart in humility. . . . The mere knowledge of what He has said serves, inasmuch as the grace to experience it was therein offered, to condemn us in a twofold sense, if we do not by experience and practice press forward to a living knowledge in that higher sense of which St. Bernard speaks, We know in proportion as we work.”

First Thought.—The servant of which our Lord speaks is literally a slave. He would

have us remember that we are not as hired servants, we have no independence as against Himself; we are absolutely His, created for His glory, and for the carrying out of His will, and for that only. We have right to exist at all only as we fulfil the end for which He brought us into being. We perceive the fact that the lower creatures of earth exist for our use and pleasure, and we hesitate not to enslave them. Let us not forget that God has yet more absolute right over us. He has supplied His slaves with many pleasant things; He has made our life here to a very large extent free, and has compassed us about with happiness. What could be better than our natural affections, the sweetness of our loves and friendships! But the Lord's servants ought never to forget that they are here upon earth for no other purpose than to do His will. We may not take time and strength for our own aims and ambitions save in accordance with His pleasure. Above all things He demands fidelity; no disloyalty is tolerated by Him. Let us ever keep in mind that this is the meaning of our Christian profession. And then, that which follows from it, "The servant is not greater than his Lord."

1. Contemplate the Lord in Gethsemane, enduring His agony; or behold Him upon the

cross, nailed through hands and feet, His head crowned with thorns. He was willing to bear all this, and many other woes of which we have no conception, that He might do the Father's will, that He might save mankind. Shall the servant then refuse to accept any cross which that Master bids him bear; shall he murmur and complain because of the hardness of the service required of him? Shall the servant demand that he be greater than his Lord?

Contemplate the Lord blindfolded, mocked, spitted on, buffeted, scourged, clothed in the purple robe, derided by those who pass before His cross. He utters never a word, He resents nothing, nor even strives to defend Himself against their most impious assaults and falsehoods. Learn from this, O soul, with what spirit thou shouldest bear reproach, and insult, and unjust accusation. Shall the servant seek to be greater than his Lord?

Second Thought.—As our Lord sets Himself before us in the character of our Master supplying example in His own life-work upon earth to His slaves, so likewise would He have us imitate Him in our goings forth to bear His message of salvation to the world. We are all of us in some sense Apostles, that is, those sent forth with glad tidings to such as know not the

truth. We ought never to forget this aspect of our Christian calling. Day by day should we report to Him Who has sent us, in our prayers bringing all our experiences in His service up before Him, for counsel, for guidance. Who can tell what blessedness may accrue to souls commended by us to our Lord in our daily petitions: He delights so to show honour to those loyally engaged in His service. We should bring our work into constant judgment before Him, faithfully rendering account in the confessional; He delights to pardon the shortcomings of His servants who frankly acknowledge their faults. We should apply ceaselessly in the sacramental life for larger measures of grace wherewith to carry on the work; He loves to shower His good things upon His servants who devoutly seek them. It is always to be remembered however that he that is sent is not to ask to be greater than He That sent him. Therefore:

1. We are to be uncompromising in our proclamation of His truth. He never abated one iota of the message with which the Father had entrusted Him for the world; nor may we.

2. We are not to fail in patience; we are to be boundless in our compassion for those who are ignorant and out of the way. He never wearied of trying to help men.

3. We are to be unsparing of self, not thinking of our ease or comfort, not even holding our lives dear. We are not to be discouraged by apparent non-success; we are never to seek our own glory or the praise of men. Our only study should be that we be found good deliverers of the message.

Third Thought.—There could hardly be a more melancholy spectacle than that afforded by contrasting our Christian profession with our Christian practice. Yet it is not because the Gospel ideals are visionary and impossible of realization. Our Lord insists upon the very highest ideals, the most perfect practice, and He surely would not do so were it out of the power of His servants to follow Him. We know the things which He requires of us; we are well aware that we shall be blessed if we do them; but how can we? The difficulty in most lives is that they do not carefully maintain the balance of the three necessary and always-prevailing conditions.

1. The first, a great good-will. We must be honestly and whole-heartedly devoted to our Master and to His work. We must never permit our enthusiasm to flag nor our purpose to relax.

2. The second, a dauntless faith. The Master has promised to support us in all our work for Him, and has given repeated assurances that we shall succeed in doing all that He would have us do. We are never to doubt, never to hesitate, no matter how hopeless the outlook seem. His grace never fails.

3. The third, genuine penitence for all our lapses. It must be that we often fail, for we are miserably weak; but in the power to repent we have an inexhaustible remedy for failure. Our Lord loves penitents.

CXIX.

"I speak not of you all: I know whom I have chosen: but that the Scripture may be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me. Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He."—St. John xiii. 18, 19.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: "*I speak not, He saith, of you all.* O what forbearance. Not yet doth He convict the traitor, but veileth the matter, hence giving him room for repentance. He convicteth and yet doth not convict him when He saith thus, *He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me.* It seems to me that the *The servant is not greater than his Lord*, was uttered for this purpose also, that if any persons should at any time suffer harm either from domestics, or from any of the meaner sort, they should not be offended; looking to the instance of Judas, who having enjoyed ten thousand good things, repaid his Benefactor with the contrary. On this account He added, *He that eateth bread with me*, and letting pass all the rest, He hath put that which

was most fitted to shame and restrain him; *He was fed by me*, He saith, *and who shared my table*. And He spake the word to instruct them to benefit those who did evil to them, even though such persons should continue incurable. Nothing so delighteth God as the not returning evil for evil. Surely we are enjoined to return the opposite, benefits, prayers. Wherefore Christ also repaid him who was about to betray Him with every thing opposite. He washed his feet, convicted him secretly, rebuked him sparingly, tended him, allowed him to share His table and His kiss, and not even by these was he made better; nevertheless Christ continued doing His own part."

Isaac Williams comments as follows: "Here our Lord does not forget His former warning and the presence of the traitor. *I speak not of you all; I know whom I have chosen*. Think not that this failure of the Twelve, this desertion of one of my chosen ones, is overreaching the divine counsels; it is, on the contrary, the very fulfilment of them. *But that the Scripture might be fulfilled, He that eateth bread with me, hath lifted up his heel against me*. Now I tell you before it come to pass, that when it shall come to pass, ye may believe that I am He. I tell you not this from expecting you to see that which now you cannot understand, but

that after it has happened you may be strengthened in your belief of me. Here it may be asked, how this was to lead them to believe that our Lord was Christ? For this they had confessed already, and were blessed and accepted for doing so. But it proves that faith, even in the best of men, is progressive; for in one sense it may be said that they have not faith, which seems intimated in the expression, *If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed*, and that it needed increase, as St. Peter prayed, *Lord increase our faith*; and for want of faith they failed this night. Thus it is sometimes intimated that they have faith; at other times as distinctly that they have not: they have saving faith, but it needed increase in consistency, and strength, and depth, and fulness, and will ever do so in this world till the finite can comprehend the infinite."

Stier adds very suggestively: "The eating bread (in the original this bread) derives a fearful meaning from the participation in the sacramental supper; a meaning which must be applied for ever to all unworthy communicants, as well as to all betrayers of Christ who eat the bread of His Church. . . . The expression, *hath lifted up his heel against me*, exhibits not merely the refractory revolt against the affectionate rule of the teacher, but also the Satanic

pride which trod under foot the humble Lord."

And again, on the words, *Now I tell you before it come to pass, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He*, the same author says: "Every thing which befalls me, even that which seems so repulsive to faith, is but the strict fulfilment of what was long ago foreseen and recorded; that I am the great Typified One throughout the Scriptures, and tell you before it has come to pass in order that ye may see that I have not trusted him, he has not deceived me, as many will you."

First Thought.—The Master had just said, "If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Now He adds, "I speak not of you all." They were not all happy, because there was the traitor among them. The faithful Apostles probably in no wise suspected Judas, he had veiled his duplicity from them completely. But the Master was not so deceived. "I know whom I have chosen," He says. He had never been unaware of the blackness of Judas's heart, nevertheless He had striven with the traitor as only the Lord could strive, to win him to better things. We may find consolation in that thought when we realize that our best efforts to persuade some dear one to the acknowledging of the truth are unsuccessful.

Only let us not forget that the Lord strove for the salvation of Judas far harder than we ever have done to win anyone. Had we but spent one half the labours and prayers upon the obdurate one which the Master expended upon Judas, we had very likely won the lost sheep long ago.

It is profitable always to apply the divine sayings to ourselves. The Lord knows every one whom He has chosen. We have right to hope that we are among His chosen ones; He knows our hearts perfectly. In spite of all our weaknesses, all our failures, all those shortcomings of which we are so well aware, and which we so deplore in our times of penitence, He is able to fashion us into chosen vessels of His grace. We need not be afraid that some day He will discover our unworthiness, as we say, and be disappointed in us. He knows us perfectly through and through, and has so known us from the day in which He first called us. The fact that He has called us, knowing us as He does, is the sure proof that we may win heaven if we will. It is certain that Judas might have been saved; it was his own fault that he was not.

But how can we make sure that we are being saved? We are to take heed that in the inner places of our lives, where our fellow-men never come, there is true service of God, a hearty turning to Him in penitence and love, a true

devotion, a yearning of the heart for the eternal things. Howbeit that of itself is not enough. There must be the daily battling with our besetting temptations, the actual victory over this and that particular temptation, and an increasing proportion of victories in the multitude of our temptations. There must be daily study to speak and act as our Master Christ did, in our intercourse with our fellows; and above all the tireless return at regular intervals to the confessional with the frank uncovering of all our falls. Then shall our Master Who has chosen us, and Who knows us in our inmost being, never disown us.

Second Thought.—The very fact that He has chosen us, has admitted us to the closest intimacy of discipleship, makes very terrible that which He goes on to say. For it is not merely true that when we fail to do battle with our besetting temptations, when we cease to be earnest in our inner selves, when we no longer strive to pattern our lives after the life of our Master Christ, and when we absent ourselves from the confessional, we are lifting up our heel against our Lord. It is bad indeed so to spurn Him, to turn upon one's heel and go back from Him. That were base enough; but those who fall as Judas fell are communic-

ants of the Church—they are such as have eaten bread with the Lord—who by mortal sin “have trodden under foot the Son of God, have counted the Blood of the covenant, wherewith they were sanctified, an unholy thing, and have done despite unto the Spirit of grace.” It is certain that we do not lay stress enough upon mortal sin, when committed by communicants. The damning element in mortal sin is its wilfulness. The believer who in his pride or anger or lust or covetousness, deliberately goes on in defiance of his conscience, realizing all the time the iniquity of that which he is doing, yet too wilful to amend his ways, is the one who treads under foot the Son of God, and does despite unto the Spirit of grace. Such an one has lifted up his heel against his Lord; he is guilty even as Judas was. How great need have we all to look well into our lives in order to make sure that we never wilfully sin against the light: and if unhappily we have so sinned, that we rest not till we have secured absolution for our sin.

Third Thought.—There is nothing more helpful to faith than being constantly on the alert for the fulfilment of God's promises. This is especially the case in the matter of the hardships and sorrows which the most devoted of

Christ's servants are called upon to endure. The shallow criticism of the children of this world is, that if God really cares for His people, and is the merciful one He represents Himself to be, He ought to save them from adversities. The argument seems to some to have yet greater force when applied to the misfortunes and trials which afflict the Church, and the dreadful scandals which sometimes drag her down, through the sins of her most highly-placed ones. How can God permit His Church thus to be disgraced in the eyes of men? Such unhappy facts are to the believer but the proof that God is all that He declares Himself to be, and that He is personally ruling over His faithful ones and guiding His Church. For He has expressly said that these are the very things we are to look for. So is our faith strengthened, and we enabled to go on fearlessly, confident that all things must come out according to His word in the end, to the triumph of His Church and the salvation of His people.

CXX.

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me; and he that receiveth me, receiveth Him That sent me. When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."—St. John xiii. 20, 21.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Thus had their Lord been instilling into them that lesson of humility which He had so seasonably taught them in washing their feet, for He had even then read their hearts; but gently allows and teaches that, with this humility, they were indeed as Apostles established on the thrones of His kingdom. Still, throughout the whole of these discourses, He immediately returns to that subject which was most pressing and near to His heart, the loss of that disciple whom He earnestly endeavoured to snatch from that precipice to which he was hurrying."

Of the words: "He that receiveth whomsoever I send, receiveth me; and he that receiveth me receiveth Him That sent me," St.

Chrysostom says; "What kind of connection hath this with what was said before? What hath it in common with that which He had said, *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them*, to add, *He that receiveth you?* A close connection and very harmonious. Observe how. When they were about to go forth, and to suffer many dreadful things, He comforteth them in two ways; one derived from Himself, the other derived from others. For if, He saith, ye are truly wise, ever keeping me in mind, and bearing about all both what I said and what I did, ye will easily endure terrible things. And not in this way only, but also from your enjoying great attention from all men. The first point He declared when He said, *If ye do these things happy are ye*; the second when He said, *He that receiveth you receiveth me*. For He opened the houses of all men to them, so that both from the sound wisdom of their manners, and the zeal of those who would hearken to them they might have twofold comfort. Then when He had given these directions to them as to men about to run through all the world, reflecting that the traitor was deprived of both these things, and would enjoy neither of them, neither patience in toils nor the service of kind entertainers, He again was troubled. And the Evangelist to

signify this besides, and to show that it was on the traitor's account He was troubled, adds *When Jesus had thus said, He was troubled in spirit, and testified, and said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, that one of you shall betray me."*

And St. Augustine, as follows: "Whether, in this place, it was by pitying that perishing Judas, that He was troubled: or whether it was that by the approach of His own death He was troubled: yet is it not by any means to be doubted that not by weakness of mind was He troubled, but of His own power; lest to us there arise despair of our salvation, when not of our own power but by weakness we are troubled. For though indeed He had yet on Him the weakness of the flesh, which weakness was by the resurrection consumed away; yet, seeing He was not only man but God also, He did by an ineffable distance surpass all of human kind in fortitude of mind. Therefore not by compulsion of any was He troubled, but troubled Himself: which thing is openly expressed concerning Him, when He raised Lazarus: for there it is written that He was troubled. For, as touching the emotions of man's nature, He, when He judged it meet, did of His own power raise them in Himself, Who of His power took upon Him the whole nature of man."

And again, the same author: "The Lord by His perturbation deigned to signify to us this also: I mean, as touching false brethren, those tares in the Lord's field, that the necessity of tolerating them among the wheat even until the harvest time is such, that when urgent cause compels the separation of some of them even before the harvest, this thing cannot but take place with perturbation to the Church. This perturbation of His saints, to be caused by schismatics and heretics, the Lord, in a sort foretelling, did prefigure in Himself, when, at the moment Judas, that bad man, was about to go forth, and by most open severance to leave the wheat among which he had long been tolerated, He was troubled, not in the flesh, but in spirit. For His spiritual ones, in scandals of this kind, not through perversity, but of charity, are troubled; lest haply in the separation of some tares, there be rooted up some wheat likewise."

First Thought.—Our Lord will not permit His faithful disciples to be overmuch cast down by the terror of His warning concerning the awful impiety of Judas. There is another side to their discipleship; it has its fearful responsibility, but its blessed encouragement also. They are sharers in His very being, made one

with Him, chosen to represent Him to the world, and therefore able to depend with absolute confidence upon Him. And this blessedness of association with our Lord belongs in the proper measure of each one to all His faithful ones, and not to the Apostles, or even to the sacred ministry only; therefore even to us.

1. There is splendid inspiration in His word, "He that receiveth whomsoever I send receiveth me." How mightily one may work with this thought to sustain him; his Master's strength is in all that he does. And how immune it must render him as to every evil! There is absolutely nothing for the servant of Christ to fear save his own lapse into sin. Nor need even this be feared if he but persevere in the way of grace.

2. There is unspeakable consolation also in our fellowship in Christ. We may by reason of our fidelity to the Master be called to surrender parents, kinsfolk, and our dearest friends; they may disown us, even hate us for our loyalty to our religion: nevertheless it is certain that in the Christian society we may find yet dearer ties, and truer friendships, such as shall endure eternally. The Master never calls us to make sacrifices for Him without

recompensing us an hundredfold in His own amazing fashion.

3. There is furthermore the unspeakable bliss of celestial vision for all such as are quite loyal to their Lord. "He that receiveth me receiveth Him That sent me." It is not merely the vision of the Lord in His gracious humanity, as He was revealed to the Twelve, but the manifestation to His faithful ones of the celestial country and the enduring things. Angels and blessed saints become their comrades, their loving fellows. And the Lord God Himself makes Himself known to them ever more and more in the wonders of His Triune Being. There is rare life-joy indeed for such as have given themselves up unreservedly to discipleship in Christ.

Second Thought.—Truly pathetic is the revelation here given us of the grief of our Lord over the defection of Judas. He had put forth such tireless, such loving efforts, to save him, though all in vain, that He could not contemplate the loss of his soul in hell with equanimity, though He ever accepted without question the equity of the divine judgment upon final impenitence. There never was a baser soul than that of Judas, never a more ungrateful one. If the Master cared so much for

him, He surely cares not less for us. We may indeed be as base and ungrateful as Judas: if we but look impartially upon our past years of life, with all their wealth of opportunity, all their store of grace, all their inexcusable-ness of transgression, we can hardly fancy ourselves much better than the traitor Apostle. If the Lord was troubled because of the loss of his soul, surely He is troubled because of the great peril our souls are in of being lost also. It is a call to us to repent while yet there is time.

1. To put away our sins. Judas confessed his sin before the priests in the temple; he brought back the blood-money; he was filled with remorse, yet he sought not pardon of his Lord. There must be faith in the precious Blood, the seeking of absolution, if we are to profit by the troubling of the Lord's spirit on our account.

2. To amend our ways. There can be little doubt that many souls who use the confessional regularly will be lost in the last day, because they have not honestly striven to amend their ways after acknowledging their falls.

Third Thought.—We are not to suppose that any of the Apostles were shaken in their faith

by the casting out of Judas, yet it has been found many times in the history of the Church, that her necessary disciplining, perhaps eventual excommunication of heretics and schismatics, has caused some of the faithful to stumble and fall away. The tares cannot be rooted up without peril to the wheat while both are yet unripened. It remains true nevertheless that the Church, acting as her Lord's representative, must cast out open and notorious offenders, after all patient efforts to bring them to repentance have proved fruitless.

1. Our Lord's dealing with the case of Judas teaches us never to be over-vehement in demanding the expulsion of false teachers and evil doers from the Church. They are to be borne with a long time, and every effort to save them is to be exhausted before the rulers of Christ's flock proceed to extremities.

2. But when the rulers of the flock have so acted in His name, and according to His authority, we are loyally to stand by them. We lament the offence, we sorrow for the offender, but we do not forget that Christ's representatives are charged with the duty of causing offences to cease, even though the wheat seem to be rooted up with the tares.

3. We should follow the unhappy offender with our prayers, if perchance he may yet be brought to repentance before it is too late.

CXXI.

"He then lying on Jesus' breast saith unto Him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it. And when He had dipped the sop, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon. And after the sop Satan entered into him. Then said Jesus unto him, That thou doest, do quickly."—St. John xiii. 25-27.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "The words, *He it is, to whom I shall give a sop, when I have dipped it*, appear not to have been heard either by the rest of the disciples, nor by Judas; and the act was perhaps meant as the last act of kindness and token of affection on our Lord's part to Judas."

And again, on the words, "What thou doest, do quickly:" "None can divine the import of these words. Origen thinks it doubtful whether they were spoken to Judas, or to Satan, who was taking possession of him, but that they refer to that faithful resolve in our Lord, which is often expressed of Him in the Psalms, as *Though an host of men were laid against me,*

yet shall not my heart be afraid; and though there rose up war against me, yet will I put my trust in Him. 'He was looking,' says Origen 'to him that entered, and to him that received him, and to all their design against Him; and baring Himself for the contest, in order to obtain victory for the salvation of mankind against the Evil One, He said, *What thou doest, do quickly.*' St. Augustine also says that He spake, not urging, but foretelling, for the salvation of others. St. Chrysostom as reproving, and showing that He would not hinder him.

'O expression of willingness,' says Augustine, 'rather of one prepared than of one angry. Not in wrath for the destruction of the perfidious one, but in haste for the salvation of the faithful, for He was delivered for our offences, and loved the Church, and gave Himself for it.' But with regard to the traitor himself, how mysterious seem the words, by a most awful and unsearchable judgment giving him leave to go on, by saying to him at the moment that he was setting out, *What thou doest, do quickly.* Thus Satan, according to the Eastern proverb, is always for hastening things; yet it can only be that God permits him to do so when wicked men are given up to his power; when this permission is given all

is lost. *And straightway Jesus gave them leave, and the unclean spirits entered into the swine, and the herd rushed down a steep place into the sea."*

St. Augustine comments as follows: "Some may be moved to say, Was this the effect of the bread of Christ handed from the table of Christ, that after it Satan should enter into His disciple? To whom we answer, that hence rather we are taught what need there is to beware of receiving a good thing in an evil way. For indeed it makes a great difference, not what one receives, but who receives: and not what sort of a thing it is that is given, but what sort of a person he is to whom it is given. For both good things are a bane, and evil things are a boon, according as the persons may be to whom they are given. . . . Ye remember of what it is written, *Whoso shall eat the Bread or drink the Cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the Body and Blood of the Lord.* And when the Apostle said this, the discourse was upon the subject of those who, treating the Lord's Body like any other food, took it in an indiscriminating and negligent way. If then this man is rebuked who does not discriminate, that is, see the difference of the Lord's Body from other meats, how must he be damned who, feigning himself

a friend, comes to His table a foe. If the touch of reproof is laid upon the negligence of the guest, with what punishment shall he be smitten through who sells the Entertainer. And the sop given to the betrayer, what was it meant for, but to show to what a grace he had been ungrateful."

Stier says: "The eye of Jesus is upon him. What a transition at this crisis, celebrated in hell, mourned in heaven. The last request of love—and then the giving up to a reprobate mind, to do the deed of reprobation. On the one hand it is indeed clear that the *what thou doest, do*, is not equivalent to an absolute imperative for the deed, but can involve no other than the permission of devoting wrath, into which grace now suddenly changes. On the other hand, the dignity of our Lord, Who could not be absolutely betrayed by Judas, but freely gave Himself up, requires that something actually imperative should be discerned in the words. It is first a commandment of the obedience of Jesus, surrendering Himself up to the Father's will, for it means, I am ready, and will not withstand thee. Yet even here, when He obeys and yields Himself up, He rules over time and hour, consequently the word is also, as Ambrose rightly saw, a command,

Get thee hence, and Judas, and Satan with him, must obey this behest."

First Thought.—The sop at the feast was the token of the especial favour and friendship of the host. The children of this world might well envy one so honoured. We are like the children of this world, and forgetful of the fact that we are children of the kingdom whenever we sigh and cry for the things which we consider marks of the divine favour, and envy those who receive them while we do not. The lesson of the gift of the sop to Judas is that those who are most in peril of betraying the Master are most likely to receive such tokens of His affection for them. Had we rather share the portion of the Eleven at the supper or that of Judas?

If we be conscious in our hearts that great and unwonted mercies are being showered upon us by heaven, we ought with great concern to betake ourselves to more heart-searching self-examination, and a deeper weighing of our thoughts and motives, lest we be heedlessly suffering ourselves to slip back into the part of the traitor. Our times of extraordinary grace should ever be thought of as times of extraordinary soul-peril.

Judas could not have fallen so low had he

not at first been raised so high, even to the dignity of the Apostolate. It is well for us to think of our Catholic heritage in the Church as fraught with peril to us, except we be ever on the alert to be loyal to our Master. One cannot be unfaithful to so high privileges as we enjoy without betraying the Lord. We are wont to pride ourselves on our knowledge of the whole faith, on our free access to all the sacraments, on the loveliness and perfection of the worship of the Church as we are permitted to have part in it. If we are of devout spirit, we are ever thanking God for such mercies, and stedfastly striving to avail ourselves of them more heartily. That is very good, but let us not forget the warning which accompanies the using of all such blessings. One who believes the Real Presence must be guilty of the sin of Judas, if he come unworthily to the Lord's table. Another who had never been taught that mysterious truth might come unprepared and yet not be accounted a traitor to Christ. The awfulness of our privilege is not meant to hold us back from coming, for that too were to be unfaithful to our Lord; but rather to make us ceaselessly careful to cherish in our hearts penitence, faith, and charity. Then we need not fear lest we be condemned as betrayers of Christ.

Second Thought.—When the Master perceived that the Evil One had wholly taken possession of unhappy Judas, so that there was no longer any hope of his salvation; He sped him on his wicked way, knowing well that despite all its awful consequences for the traitor's own soul, that wicked way should further the work of the world's redemption. He thought not of all the anguish which must overwhelm His own soul, all the agonizing pains His holy flesh must endure, for He was filled with a great eagerness to perfect the work of our redemption; therefore said He to Judas, "That thou doest, do quickly."

The Redeemer had no fear of wickedness. He knew the utmost possibilities of its working, and Himself held all its powers with master hand. So soon as the purpose of His heavenly Father permitted it, He was glad to give the Evil One free rein to run his course to ruin, for that much sooner should the restitution of the universe come. We need never gloomily anticipate the workings out of evil, as of some dread, uncontrolled power which may wreck God's gracious work. Satan can bring about in the world only that which the Most High wills, and his malignity but accomplishes the blessed result the sooner. His power is to be feared in our souls alone when our wills co-

operate with him to precipitate our ruin. If we but remain loyal to our Master Christ, as the faithful Eleven did in the night that Judas fell, we may look always without dismay upon the efforts of the Evil One against the Church, the faith, and God's holy Word, crying dauntlessly, "That thou doest, do quickly"; for the more speedily Satan's devilish work advances to its maturity, the sooner will the triumph of the Master Christ begin.

Third Thought.—The example of that unhappy traitor Apostle is held up before us in order that by timely repentance we may escape his fate. When we think of that we are strongly moved to compunction for our many sins, and to determination to live more devoutly. At such times let us hear the voice of the Master saying to us, "That thou doest, do quickly." Satan works very swiftly; if we would escape him we must not tarry in our repentance, and the amendment of our ways.

1. There is great profit in turning instantly to God, when conscience convicts us, and beseeching Him very humbly to put away our sin. It is the part of wise ones too to seek the confessional without delay, after every grievous fall, that they may be restored through absolution.

2. And when one feels deeply the sense of unworthiness and unreality in one's Christian life, it is a great thing to begin immediately, that very hour, to live on a higher plane. Too often the sin-convinced soul would put off the amendment of its ways to this or that day in the future: yet the accepted time is ever now. They are wise who cease not day by day to renew their striving after holiness with fresh resolution, with more determined effort. "That thou doest, do quickly."

CXXII.

"He then having received the sop went immediately out: and it was night. Therefore when he was gone out, Jesus said, Now is the Son of man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God be glorified in Him, God shall also glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him."—St. John xiii. 30-32.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "Something I see here that may prefigure some great thing. Judas is gone out, and Jesus is glorified; gone out, the son of perdition; glorified, the Son of man. He was gone out because of whom it was said to them, Ye are clean, but not all. On the going out therefore of the unclean, all that were left were clean, and were left with their Cleanser. Somewhat like this shall be, when, conquered by Christ, this world shall have passed away, and there shall be none unclean left in the people of Christ; when, the tares being parted from the wheat, the just shall shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The Lord foreseeing this about to be, and declaring it to be now signified; the de-

parture of Judas as the separating of the tares, the holy Apostles left as the wheat; *Now*, saith He, *is the Son of man glorified*: as though He should say, Lo, what shall be in that glorifying of me, where none of the bad shall be, where none of the good shall cease to be. It is not however said thus: Now is signified the glorifying of the Son of man; but it is said, *Now is the Son of man glorified*; just as it is not said, The Rock signified Christ, but, *The Rock was Christ*: neither is it said, The good seed signifies the children of the kingdom, or, The tares signify the children of the wicked one, but it is said, *The good seed, these are the children of the kingdom, but the tares the children of the wicked one*. As then the Scripture is wont to speak, calling the things signifying as if they were the things signified, so the Lord spake, *Now is the Son of man glorified*: when, that most wicked one being separated thence, and the saints being left with Him, signified His glorifying which is to be, when, the unrighteous being separated, He shall be left in eternity with the saints."

And St. Chrysostom: "Here He calleth the cross glory, showing us that there is nothing so shameful and reproachful which makes not brighter Him Who goeth to it; if it be done according to the will of God. At least after

the going forth of Judas to the betraying, He saith, *Now is the Son of man glorified*. In this way rousing the dejected thoughts of the disciples, and persuading them not only not to despond, but even to rejoice. On this account He rebuked Peter at the first, because for one who has been in death to overcome death, is great glory. . . . *And shall straightway glorify Him*, that is, simultaneously with the cross. For it will not be after much time, He saith, nor will He wait for the distant season of the resurrection, nor will He then show Him glorious, but straightway on the cross itself His glories shall appear. And so the sun was darkened, the rocks rent, the veil of the temple was parted asunder, many bodies of the saints that slept arose, the tomb had its seals, the guards sat by, and while a stone lay over the Body, the Body arose; forty days passed by, and the gift of the Spirit came, and they all straightway preached Him. This is, *shall glorify Him in Himself, and shall straightway glorify Him*; not by angels or archangels, not by any other power, but by Himself. But how did He also glorify Him by Himself? By doing all for the glory of the Son. Yet the Son did all. Seest thou that He referreth to the Father the things done by Himself?"

Origen says: "That the glorifying of Christ

was twofold ought to be traced here: First, by the act of the traitor, now decisively commencing, the death of the Lord, that is, His glorification, now appears to be as a fact accomplished: and secondly, the Lord, after the removal of this opposing instrument of hell, this vainly loved one, over whose spirit He in the Spirit had won the great victory, can now first speak freely concerning His glory. . . . In no other way than the death of the cross, now regarded by Him as coming and come, present and accomplished, is the Son of man first of all glorified—in this humiliation He is exalted, in this darkness of shame does His glory beam forth, from Golgotha go forth those attracting energies which are to wrest from Satan the world of mankind. The Lord speaks of a twofold glorification. He is first of all made perfect in obedience through suffering, as the Captain of our salvation, for the entire race of mankind: His dying becomes the acme of His divinely-loving and self-sacrificing life, and thus the image of God in man is once more restored, and exhibited to us. Yet there follows immediately from this, according as it were to the advancing revelation of His career, the Dying One rising again, and ascending into heaven, the glorification of the Son of man in God."

First Thought.—Our Lord Christ was truly glorified by God in His passion. That was His supreme moment of victory over all the power of the Evil One. To human eyes He then seemed utterly devoid of glory, to have lost even the favour of heaven; in reality He was overthrowing all the kingdom of hell. The Master knew in Himself that He was being glorified by His death. It was the height of His ambition of love to pay the ransom of a guilty world in His own Life-Blood, and He was full of glad zeal as He mounted the cross. That shining vocation of His, the restoration of the fallen world to God, had been ever before Him since the day He first took flesh in Mary's womb. Now He was on the point of realizing it.

He was glorified on high in His passion, for all the armies of the angels looked on in adoring love and admiration while He suffered. God was glorified in Him, as He hung upon the cross, for then was accomplished in potency all the divine purpose for the universe. The new Adam in His passion vindicated the creation of the old Adam, and brought that deed of the divine love, which seemed to have so lamentably failed, to a glorious and unspeakably worthy consummation.

We, following our Master, are glorified whenever we heartily resist temptation; whenever we

put away our sins by frank confession of them; whenever we take part in the bearing of our Lord's cross by willing self-denials and loving acts of service. He who prays much for others, he who fasts and abstains with the thought of joining in the passion of the Master, he who gives time and strength and means to good works—all such further the triumph of the Lord over the Evil One, and by their faithful discipleship are in heaven's eyes glorified.

Second Thought.—God never suffers the loving work of His servants to go unrecompensed. The Son had glorified the Father; in His passion the Father would also glorify the Son in Himself. This we are to understand as fulfilled on Ascension Day, and ever thereafter. For as the Master had suffered in His human nature, that human nature was exalted into heaven to be the visible object of the worship of the Lamb *as It had been slain*, by all the celestial hosts with rapturous adoration. It is the glorifying of our Lord by the Father in Himself, that is, of the humanity of the Son in the Essential Being of the most holy Trinity.

If we here, through participation in His passion, according to our ability, glorify our Lord, it is certain that He will recompense us by glorifying us. In the fullest sense this is to be realized hereafter in heaven, where the Mas-

ter shall delight to show honour to His followers. But even in this world we have a right to find ourselves glorified by His love and favour. It is not necessary that the world should recognize us as glorified. It did not so recognize Him when He hung upon the cross, but He was conscious then of His glorification, and we may be of ours, even while all the hardness of the life of discipleship in Christ is being experienced.

1. We are glorified by the gift of prayer vouchsafed us, and the surprises which it has ever in store for us, as we adventure more and more in our dependence upon God.

2. There is the consciousness of sacramental nearness which at rare intervals fills the soul with inexpressible sweetness and peace, though the rapture of it be so far removed from all earthly experience that it can scarcely be believed by the soul.

3. There is the vision which faith opens out, of the unseen realities, of heaven with all its glorious company, seemingly too lovely to be true, yet so plainly recognized by the happy believer that it cannot be doubted.

Third Thought.—Our Lord adds to His word very strikingly, "And shall straightway

glorify Him." It was to begin immediately, that very day. And so it came to pass. He was glorified when the band of Judas at the Master's saying, "I am He," went backward and fell to the ground in homage. He was glorified when the dying thief confessed Him, when the heavens by their blackness, the earth by its quaking, the veil by its rending, the tombs by their opening, acknowledged His deity. He was glorified when the centurion exclaimed, "Certainly this was a righteous man," when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus came to bury Him. And on Easter day He was further glorified by the many witnesses to the fact of His resurrection.

The Master does not fail to glorify His loyal followers even in this life, among their fellow-believers. We may not know many of those whom we are edifying by our faithfulness to Christ; it is better that we should not, for then pride might enter in to dim our glory. It is certain however that we cannot live simple and devout lives without thereby glorifying God for some of those among whom we dwell. The Apostle writes to the Galatians of the way in which the believers who knew of his wonderful conversion glorified God in him. Which of us does not know of beautiful Christian lives among our fellow Church-members which are

a daily inspiration to us, and for which we thank God? Everyone of us, if faithful to Christ, may be an inspiration to some of those about us. Our Lord always glorifies His servants straightway if they do but whole-heartedly serve Him.

CXXIII.

"Little children, yet a little while I am with you. Ye shall seek me; and as I said unto the Jews, Whither I go, ye cannot come; so now I say to you. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."—St. John xiii. 33-35.

Exposition. — St. Chrysostom says: "He sheweth that His death is a removal, and a change for the better, to a place which admits not corruptible bodies. This He saith both to excite their love towards Him, and to make it more fervent. Ye know that when we see any of our nearest friends departing from us, our affection is warmest, and the more so, when we see them going to a place to which it is not even possible for us to go."

And again: "Since it was likely that they would be troubled when they heard these things, as though they were about to be deserted, He comforteth them, investing them with that which was the root of all blessings, and a safe

guard, love. By this He at the same time showed that the company should never be extinguished, when He gave them a distinguishing token. This He said when the traitor was cut off from them. But how calleth He that a new commandment which is contained also in the old? He maketh it new Himself by the manner: therefore He added, *As I loved you.* I have not paid back to you a debt of good deeds first done by you, but myself have begun, He saith. And so ought you to benefit your dearest ones, though you owe them nothing; and omitting to speak of the miracles which they should do, He maketh their characteristic love. And why? Because it is this which chiefly shows men holy; it is the foundation of all virtue, by this mostly we are all even saved. For this, He saith, is to be a disciple; so shall all men praise you when they see you imitating my love."

And St. Augustine: "By reason of this new commandment, the members of the Spouse, the Bride of Christ, are solicitous one for another, and, *if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it, and if one member be glorified, all the members rejoice with it.* For they hear and keep the saying, *A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another;* not as they love which corrupt one another, nor as

men love one another because they are men; but as they love one another because they are *gods, and all of them sons of the Most High*, that they may be brothers to His only Son, loving one another with that love wherewith He hath loved them, Who shall bring them to that end which shall suffice them, where their desire shall be satisfied with good things."

And of the words: "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another," the same father writes: "As though He should say, Other gifts of mine in common with you have they also that are not mine; not only nature, life, sense, reason, and that salvation which is common to men and beasts; but also tongues, sacraments, prophecy, knowledge, faith, the distributing of their goods to the poor, and giving up of their body to be burned: but since they have not charity, they are as tinkling cymbals, they are nothing, it profiteth them nothing."

Isaac Williams says: "The words which He had spoken twice to the Jews He again repeats the third time, but in another sense; for the Jews could not come to the place whither He went, for they would *die in their sins*; but His disciples could not on account of His departure from the world to the Father. Yet a little while; for it was for but a few hours more that

He would thus converse with them, as one partaking of human infirmities; and thus He spoke afterwards of this His mortal condition as *While I was yet with you*. And a little while, for a few days, was it in another sense, when He would be visible among them, and speak of the things concerning His kingdom until His ascension. And a little while, for a few years, would He, after another manner, be with them in the Spirit even unto the end; for this also would be but for a little while. But this His new and spiritual presence in His Church would depend on that new law of love, which He was going to leave with them as His last and best legacy."

Sadler comments as follows: "In what respect is this commandment new, seeing that the Lord had shown that on two commands—to love God with all our hearts, and our neighbour as ourselves—hang all the Law and the Prophets? The commandment is new as regards the extent of its fulfilment. It is not merely that we love one another, but *as I have loved you, that ye also love one another*. As I have received you, so are ye to receive one another; as I have forgiven you, so are ye to forgive one another; as I have borne with you, so are ye to bear with one another; as I have washed your feet, so are ye to wash one

another's feet; as I die for you, so ought ye to lay down your lives for the brethren."

First Thought.—There is a distinct tone of sadness in the Master's word, "Little children, yet a little while I am with you." He is so deeply attached to them that even the thought of that leaving them which is necessary for their eternal welfare saddens Him. He puts Himself so completely into their place that He feels about His approaching departure as they feel. His is the very perfection of sympathy. That does not make Him hesitate to go on unshrinkingly in the course which is for their souls' salvation. He never permits us to forget that the things of this present life are transitory, and cannot satisfy our nature. Therefore though we must abide in them for a time, for our probation, nevertheless we are ever to look forward to and set our hope upon the eternal things. We cannot yet follow Him into the celestial country whither He has ascended, yet the time will come when that blessedness shall be accorded us also. We are still so much creatures of this present world that our seeking the Master is almost always in order that we may be delivered from earthly ills, or that we may obtain earthly good things. He does grant us these favours in no small measure, just be-

cause we are His little children, and He is very indulgent to us; it is needful for us however that He be very sparing of such favours in most cases, else we should cease to sigh and to cry for the better things, and thus forfeit our inheritance on high. Therefore He remains with us after that sort only for a little while at a time, answering our prayers for temporal necessities, supplying us with earthly consolations and happiness, indeed with much more of this world's good than we have any claim to. We ought ever more and more to arouse ourselves to the blessedness of the spiritual realities, in order that growing all the time less concerned about the temporal things, we might in heart and mind ascend on high with our Lord, and there continually dwell with Him. Though we cannot follow Him now in the fullest sense, we can do so in such spiritual reality through devout living that afterwards, when the things of this present life are ended for us, we shall in the Spirit mount up with Him even to the throne on high.

Second Thought.—In order to enable us to follow Him whither He has gone, He gives us His new commandment as a second lawgiver, adding to the old decalogue; yet adding to it only in the sense of summing it all up in one

great obligation of discipleship, and glorifying that with a certain heavenliness which it could not before His coming possess. There is no relaxation of the original obligation to love God with all one's heart and mind and soul and strength, and one's neighbour—that is every needy one who crosses our path—as one's self; but there is added to all this a new relationship of the faithful in Christ one with another. We are members of His Body, of His Flesh and of His Bones, therefore united in a bond inexpressibly holy, unapproachably tender. In a sense this bond is between all Christians, that is, all who have been baptized into Christ, and are striving to love and serve Him. But unhappily heresy and schism have entered the Christian world, and many who love and serve Christ are not of the Communion of the Catholic Church. For these we must feel a special love and a very ardent longing to bring them to the fulness of the truth. But for our fellow-Catholics throughout the world there must be a bond of tenderness and sympathy such as cannot be felt for any other. They are very members of our Master Christ as others cannot be.

1. It means that we should feel a great sensitiveness and jealousy for the welfare of Catho-

lic Christendom everywhere, always championing the Catholic cause, always doing whatever we can to help and further it.

2. It means that we should never permit ourselves to show animosity or a contentious spirit towards our fellow-Catholics. If they fault or disparage our own Communion, we are to stand resolutely in defence of it, but not with re-creation or resentment. We are never to forget brotherly love in witnessing for the truth.

Third Thought.—Our Lord says that by the brotherly love which our lives manifest all men shall know that we are His disciples. The world is ready enough to charge believers with uncharitableness, and too often the charge is well founded. It used to be said in the early days of the Gospel by the heathen, "See how these Christians love one another." Unhappily that would sound like bitter irony in these days. We are not to forget that it is vain to point to our zeal in prayer and worship, to our self-denials and generous almsdeeds, if our lives do not manifest love of the brethren. Men may charge us with intolerance if we be tenacious of the faith of the Church, as we ought to be; but in their hearts they will acquit us of being unlike our Master Christ if we be plainly un-

selfish in our loyalty. It is perfectly possible to be most strenuous in maintaining the faith against false systems of Christianity, and the dignity of our own Communion against papal aggression, without showing personal animosity, without failing in true charity.

CXXIV.

"Simon Peter said unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou? Jesus answered him, Whither I go, thou canst not follow me now; but thou shalt follow me afterwards. Peter said unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake. Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow till thou hast denied me thrice."—St. John xiii. 36-38.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: "Christ had said that He must be betrayed: Peter replied, *Be it far from Thee, Lord; this shall not happen unto Thee.* He was rebuked, but not instructed. On the contrary, when Christ desired to wash his feet, he said, *Thou shalt never wash my feet.* Again, when he hears, *Thou canst not follow me now,* he saith, *Though all deny Thee, I will not deny Thee.* Since then it was likely that he would be lifted up to folly by his practice of contradiction, Jesus next teacheth him not to oppose Him. This too Luke implies, when he telleth us that Christ said, *And I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not;* that is, that thou be not

finally lost. In every way teaching him humility, and proving that human nature by itself is nothing. But since great love made him apt for contradiction, He now sobereth him, that he might not in after times be subject to this, when he should have received the stewardship of the world, but remembering what he had suffered, might know himself."

St. Augustine likewise: "Let infirmity acknowledge sin, for the Truth hath no lie. For in fact, the infirmity of Peter did acknowledge his sin, yea, did quite acknowledge: and how great evil he committed in denying Christ, he showed by his weeping. He refutes his own defenders, and to convict them, produces his tears as witnesses. Nor in saying these things does it delight us to accuse the chief of the Apostles; but in looking at him it behoves us to be admonished, that no man should trust in man's strength. For what else had our Teacher and Saviour in view, but only to demonstrate to us by example in the very chief of the Apostles, that a man ought under no circumstances whatever to presume upon himself? And so in Peter's soul that came to pass which he offered in his body. Yet not for the Lord, as he rashly presumed; he went before, but otherwise than he thought. For before the death and resurrection of the Lord, he both died by deny-

ing, and came to life again by weeping: but then, he died because he proudly presumed upon himself, and came to life again, because the Lord benignly turned and looked upon him."

Isaac Williams comments thus: "*Simon Peter saith unto Him, Lord, whither goest Thou?* Not wishing to know this so much as suspecting that our Lord spoke of death or some great trial, to express his determination not to desert Him. Our Lord answers, as St. Chrysostom says, not to his words, but to the thought of his heart. *Jesus answered him, Whither I go thou canst not follow me now, but thou shalt follow me afterwards.* In great love and tenderness, not rejecting his devout wish, but speaking of a time when at last he should be so strengthened, as to be able to follow even unto death, and a death so terrible: taking up the better part of His disciple's words, which should indeed be fulfilled beyond the thought of the speaker; in like manner as He did when St. John and St. James expressed their power to drink of His cup, and be baptized with His baptism.

"Peter, not aware of his own weakness and need of strength from above, *saith unto Him, Lord, why cannot I follow Thee now? I will lay down my life for Thy sake.* Here was a challenge on the part of human nature, in its

very best estate, to do something like that which Christ was going to do: to love as He loved us; and here was shown, as Augustine says, 'That the most zealous of men and chief of Apostles has not love sufficient to lay down his life for his friend. Christ surveyed him as the physician does the sick man, when he has the will to do that which he has no power to perform.' 'Our Lord wished to show us,' says the same writer, 'in the chief of the Apostles, what human strength, trusting to itself, could do.' *Jesus answered him, Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake? Verily, verily, I say unto thee, The cock shall not crow until thou shalt deny me thrice;* or, as we may perhaps interpret it, before the cock-crowing or rise of the morning. Not as if once only, by a sudden surprise, or under overwhelming impulse, but shalt thrice repeat thy denial of me."

First Thought.—The Master answers that which was in the heart of the impetuous disciple, rather than the words of his lips. St. Peter's loving heart determined him to follow his Lord at whatever cost to himself. That was admirable, but in St. Peter's case, as almost always in the case of zealous but undisciplined disciples, there was self-sufficiency and a lack of dependence upon grace. Our Lord's word

seems at first to contradict that which He ever speaks at the calling of His faithful ones, "Follow me." And indeed this is the whole substance of the Christian life, His disciples must follow Him. Why then does He say, "Thou canst not follow me now."? It appears possible enough to walk in His footsteps, whithersoever they lead, but that is because we have not made trial of the utter hopelessness of pursuing the devout life save through daily dependence upon supernatural grace. As one advances in the spiritual way he becomes more and more appalled at the discovery of the ingrained perversity of his own nature, the taint which blights every good thing he strives to do, the unworthiness of his motives, the failure of his love. It is often true that only after long years of Christian experience one learns his utter dependence for salvation upon the Lord's mercy in judgment and the unfailing helps of grace.

The Master's word has also its note of great encouragement: "Thou shalt follow me afterwards." When will that be? For St. Peter it was in the very hour of his death, when in glad martyrdom he too gave up his life upon the cross. It may very likely not be for us until old age, when we no longer have power to work for our Master, but only to suffer for Him.

It will surely be for us in purgatory, if haply we attain to its healing rest; then at last we shall be sure that we are following our Master in the royal road of suffering. It will be in the highest and most glorious sense when the elect attain the Vision, and in all eternity follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth.

Second Thought.—The Lord continually presses home upon every zealous follower the word which He spake to St. Peter, “Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?”

1. One is confident that he would if the test were to come as we like in our enthusiasm to picture it; in some splendid struggle against overwhelming hosts of foes, as St. Peter doubtless felt when single-handed he advanced to give battle to the whole company of Judas in defence of his Master. Or as one might be called to go upon some mission among the heathen where there was every likelihood that he would speedily be called to martyrdom. Or as in days of persecution for one's religion, where failure to deny Christ would mean instant and perhaps very horrible death. Or as in days of plague or pestilence, when it was one's manifest duty to stay at one's post among the dead and dying, ministering fearlessly,

though at any moment one's own turn to die might come.

2. But what if the call to lay down one's life mean that which it very often does, to see every treasured and well-loved thing of this world taken from one, health, and money, and friends, the privileges of the Church, the consolations of worship, perhaps even hearing and eyesight; so to live on bereft of all earthly helps, in pain and poverty. Should we be willing thus to lay down our lives for His sake, did He require it of us?

3. Perhaps more difficult still is that laying down of one's life for Him which is demanded when we find that to overcome our wretched heart-sinfulness we must wage a life-long battle with our besetting temptation, never free for one moment to relax our vigilance, condemned to a ceaseless self-denying and the surrender of many things most dear to our natural selves. What shall be our reply if His question, "Wilt thou lay down thy life for my sake?" come to us after such a sort as this?

Third Thought.—At best the longest earthly life in comparison of eternity is but as that last short watch of the night, the cock-crowing which precedes the dawn. Yet which of us,

even though the cock have not already crowed to tell us that our time of probation is ended, has not denied his Master as grievously as St. Peter? It may be even thrice.

1. For which of us having been called upon to make a brave fight against unbelieving, perhaps scoffing odds, for truth, for purity, for reverence, has not played the coward?

2. Which of us having been required to surrender cherished hopes, fair ideals, idolized dear ones, health, strength, money, the good opinion of those about us, has not found that instead of the glad sacrifice of even life itself, he has reproached God, murmured and rebelled, and has failed in every way to pattern his conduct after that of the Master?

3. Which of us having been brought face to face with the fact that in his life there lurked an evil temptation which allowed to have its way must land his soul in hell, and which he could only hope to master by tireless watchfulness, ceaseless self-restraint, a constant humble resort to the confessional—which of us under such conditions has remained loyal to his Master and not denied Him?

CXXV.

"Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. In my Father's house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you."—St. John xiv. 1, 2.

Exposition. — Isaac Williams says: "The words and manner of our Lord, so full of His approaching sufferings—the bereavement of His disciples, and His declaration that one of them should betray, and another deny Him, had now filled them with sadness. But the Eucharistic table was replete with mysterious consolation, and these His words which accompanied it, like an Eucharistic sermon, more than human in sympathy, more than angelic in sweetness, most divine in doctrine. Let not your heart be troubled; ye believe in God, believe also in me; ye are filled with a sense of the holiness, and justice, and power of God: believe also in me, by Whom you may have access to the Father. Be not overwhelmed by the thought of that holiness, which He requires of those who are around Him, nor by the trials which await you,

and your own frailty, which I have foretold. *In my Father's house there are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you: I go to prepare a place for you.* There are different orders of angelic beings in those heavenly places, and I go to prepare a place for you that are redeemed from among mankind: there are the ninety and nine who are left in the fold of God, and I go to carry the lost sheep that I have found. Or it may be, that among the saints in heaven there will be different degrees of glory, and the humble need not despair. For although the labourers were each paid alike a penny a day; and they who had improved their talents entered alike into the joy of their Lord: yet it may be that, as one star differeth from another star in glory, so the mansions of the saints are of different brightness."

St. Augustine comments as follows: "How go and prepare a place if there are already many mansions? Had it not been so He would have said, I go to prepare. Or if it is yet to be prepared, why should He not with good reason have said, I go to prepare? Is it so that these mansions are both in being, and yet are to be prepared? He both hath prepared, and is preparing; and not others, but those which He hath prepared the same is He preparing, Who hath done the things that are

future: the same which He hath prepared by predestinating He is preparing by working. Already therefore they are, in predestination; were it not so He would have said, I will go and prepare, that is, will predestinate. But because they do not yet exist in working, He saith, And if I go away, and prepare a place for you, I come again, and will receive you unto myself."

And St. Chrysostom: "*Let not your heart be troubled.*" This He saith because it was probable that when they heard they would be troubled. For if the leader of their band, one so entirely fervent, was told that before the cock crew he should thrice deny his Master, it was likely that they would expect to have to undergo some great reverse, sufficient to bend even souls of adamant. Since then it was probable that they considering these things would be astounded, see how He comforteth them, saying, *Let not your heart be troubled.* By this first word showing the power of His Godhead, because, what they had in their hearts, He knew and brought to light. . . . As He comforteth Peter when bewildered, by saying, But thou shalt follow me afterwards, so also He gives this glimpse of hope to the others. For lest they should think that the promise was given to him alone, He saith, *In my Father's house*

are many mansions. If it were not so I would have said to you, I go to prepare a place for you. That is, The same place which receiveth Peter shall receive you. For a great abundance of dwellings is there."

St. Gregory likewise: "The many mansions agree with the one penny, because, though one may rejoice more than another, yet all rejoice with one and the same joy, arising from the vision of their Maker. Nor is there any sense of deficiency in consequence of such inequality, for each will feel as much as sufficeth for himself."

Stier says: "The preparing a place for us was necessary according to the whole analogy of Scripture teaching. The shrinking of our heart from the whither of the going away has its good ground: but our Forerunner would take away our fear by the assurance that He, the Son, goes into His Father's house for us. The gracious figure attaches itself to the custom of providing an abiding place beforehand in travelling; but it has here a most profound and real meaning which goes far beyond this."

First Thought.—The disciples, as devout Jews, had never found it hard to believe in the greatness and holiness of God on high. As the followers of our Lord, they could not doubt His

tireless wealth of compassion and gentle goodness. But when He should be taken from them, would they be able still to retain their absolute confidence in Him? That is what He urges upon them, clearly maintaining His divinity; He would have them believe in Him as their God, while losing none of their confident trust in Him as man, with human sympathies to which they need never fear to make appeal; this was to be their perpetual stay against heart-troubling because of the vicissitudes of this present world; still more when there should come home to them an increasing sense of the grievousness of their falls, and their lack of loyalty to Him.

There are among believers both those who find it hard to believe in the severity and hopelessness of the judgment which our Lord shall after death pass upon every unfaithful one; and those who are so weighed down with the sense of the sinfulness of their lives that it seems impossible for them to trust in the inexhaustible wealth of His pardon. It is most needful for us all to remember that His compassions fail not in the case of honest penitents; nevertheless penitence is not truly honest, no matter how contrite the heart may be, unless there be ceaseless effort to put away out of one's

life the evil thing. When one repents daily, when he ceases not daily to wrestle with besetting temptation, he need not fear lest he exhaust the compassion of the Master.

Second Thought.—The Greek word translated “mansion,” signifies a dwelling place, with the suggestion of permanence, a home from which one shall not have to move. It is good to think that in that Father’s house the heavenly country whereunto He has gone before us, there are many such mansions, all of them destined to be filled at last with God’s people; and very lovable people they must be. It is good to think that there are all types of mansions there, great and glorious, humble yet not less perfect. For we easily feel our inability to rise to any great height of saintliness; we are not capable of great sacrifices, we never mount to great raptures of devotion. When one reads the lives of the saints, and considers the wonderful things which they accomplished through the excellence of their love for Christ, one might well feel the hopelessness of aspiring to share their blessedness. Happily then there are many mansions, mansions not only for great saints, but for little saints as well. But we must not disparage the power of the divine

grace to transform our lives, and make them glorious beyond conception. We cannot understand this now; and it is well that we should think little of ourselves, and trust only that through the infinity of the divine compassion, and the omnipotence of the divine grace, we shall attain to the least of the many mansions.

The Master adds that if it were not so He would have told us. Because it is instinctive with us, despite all our earthliness, to hope for heaven, and to cherish the confidence that by some means in the wealth of the divine goodness, place will be found there even for us. Had that instinct been a delusion, He would have told us. He would not have suffered us to go on striving in our blundering way to win eternal life, had there been no hope of it for us. Only let us not forget that all we can know concerning the many mansions is what He has told us. He does not disguise from us the fact that besides heaven there is also hereafter the awful abode of hell, and that many are lost therein: that no one may hope to attain the celestial country save through persistent loyalty and genuine penitence.

Third Thought.—It is the wonder of the Father's house, the heavenly kingdom, that although every part of it be radiant with celestial

beauty, though it be so adorned with goodly stones, and pearls, and the silver and gold of great deeds of love, that its loveliness is incomparable, nevertheless every mansion in the measureless structure, even each smallest one, has its own function and part in the glory of the whole. There are no stones in that building which are there merely for ornament; there are no dwellings built into its structure to afford a refuge to poor pitied ones, which serve no purpose in the Father's house itself. It is the will of our Master that every one of us, in the celestial temple, should have his own place, a place which can be filled by him as by no other; a place which the Master has busied Himself in preparing. Human life is amazingly diversified, no two types, not even of the greatest saints, are exactly alike; St. Paul differs from St. Peter, and St. John from them both. The same is true of lesser souls. The Master never loses sight even for a moment of any soul; He follows it in all the intricacies of its falls and repentances, all the vicissitudes of its warfare with besetting temptation; He foresees at what point in the life-struggle He shall send the death angel to call it to judgment, and He knows just what type of eternal vocation it will then be fitted for, that God may be

glorified in it for ever. Because He thus knows throughly all His children, He fashions with unerring hand the mansion of each that it may have its proper place in His Father's house.

CXXVI.

"And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. And whither I go ye know, and the way ye know."—St. John xiv. 3, 4.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "It may be asked, How does our Lord come again to receive those to whom He spoke, who would die before the last day? or, How is it that He will there receive Christians, if they are spoken of as going to Him at their deaths, as St. Paul says, *Having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ?* And St. Stephen, *Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.* And the dead in the Lord *shall Christ bring with Him.* The difficulty is remarkable as being in perfect correspondence with the mysterious expressions that are always used of Christ's coming; for doubtless they do more fully and entirely refer to the last day, when soul and body will be re-united to meet the Lord. Yet in some subordinate sense they are all fulfilled also at natural death, when, in some very blessed manner, the dead depart to

Christ, and are with Christ, and He comes to receive them, as He promises, unto Himself. And this preparation also is doubtless twofold; the preparing a place for us, and preparing a place in us for Himself. He goes to prepare a place for us; and yet He stays to prepare a place in us for Himself. As St. Augustine very beautifully observes, "Let the Lord therefore go and prepare a place: let Him go that He may not be seen, let Him be concealed that He may be believed on. For there is a place being prepared when we live by faith. Let Him be believed on that He may be desired, let Him be desired that He may be obtained; for the desire of love is the preparing of the mansion. So, Lord, prepare what Thou preparest; for Thou preparest us for Thyself; and Thyself for us: for Thou preparest a place both in us for Thyself, and in Thyself for us. For Thou hast said, *Abide in me, and I in you.* According as each one shall be partaker of Thee, one less, and another more, so will be the diversity of rewards according to the diversity of merits; this will be the many mansions according to the diversity of those who shall abide in them, but yet all shall live in eternity, and be blessed without end."

Hengstenberg comments as follows: "There is no reason why we should rob ourselves of

the gracious consolation which this declaration of our Lord reserves for the time of our departure; we should rather receive it into our heart, and overcome by it all the terrors of death, which then assumes a friendly aspect, when we know that the Lord accompanies it to take us to Himself."

And again the same writer: "The definite words in which a knowledge of the way to heaven was here attributed to the disciples were intended to expose to them the uncertainty in which they still remained, to give occasion for further instruction upon it, and to ensure for that other instruction a ready access. The disciples knew more than they supposed, as Augustine says, 'The disciples knew, but they knew not that they knew.' As certainly as they believed in the Lord, so certainly had they recognized in Him the true way to heaven. But their sorrow had thrown for the moment a cloud over their knowledge, and this cloud the Lord now sought to disperse."

And Stier: "They have now the knowledge of the sure and certain way to their home, to His Father, and their Father; they do not, they should not, contemplate merely as from afar the high and mysterious goal which the brightness of His words revealed, but it is brought home to them directly through His promised coming

again. Ought not the Lord to be able after three years to say, If I go away, ye know whither; whither but to the Father, to the great house above? But indeed He condescendingly attributes to His disciples His own clearness and confidence, though they are far from possessing them. Is it the way, for me and for you, that we, after our separation, may be eternally together? This they should know, that for Him it is no other than death, glorifying and leading Him to the Father; and for them? No other than the following Him unto death, in faith and in love waiting for Him, and depending upon Him. To embrace all this in its plain meaning was beyond their capacity; but yet the redoubled and emphatic *ye know* has its truth. First, even as one is praised in order that he may be warned concerning his duty, ye might and ye ought to know. Then, for the future, I have now told you, and ye shall soon understand it."

First Thought. — In dwelling upon the earthly life of our Lord as revealed in the Scriptures, there comes naturally a pang of regret that such happiness as that of the Apostles in thus beholding Him, and speaking with Him, and following Him about continually, may never be ours. We are fain to envy those

happy ones their blessed portion. Yet even from them He went away, and that must have been doubly hard for them to bear after having known Him so intimately. He had thus to teach them that such outward nearness to Him could not of itself profit their souls for eternity. They must come to know Him, and dwell with Him after a different sort, if they were never to be separated from Him. It is plain enough then that when He says, "I will come again and receive you unto myself," He does not mean that He will come after the old manner. It is certain that His faithful ones often experienced the reality of His return to them even while they were upon earth, in the solemnity of prayer, and of worship, they perceived His presence and rejoiced in it. Indeed of the saints it is true that they learn to dwell continually in the divine presence, to have ever with them the consciousness of the Master's nearness.

The same blessed reality may be most true for us in these days. In whatever ways the Lord has appointed for our meeting with Him, it is certain He never fails to keep His appointments. He is ever first at the rendezvous, whether it be of prayer or of holy sacrament; He comes again and again to receive us unto Himself.

Most true is this of the hour of death for God's loyal ones; their Lord then in very wonderful fashion comes for them. We watch beside the dying bed of our dear ones, and weep for the thought that they must go out alone into the hidden world; our loving ministrations can no longer reach them, our words of encouragement be no longer heard by them. What matters if the Master Himself be perceived by them standing there and waiting for them, just so soon as their souls have entered that new realm of being? It is a comforting thought, indeed, if the faithful who go forth to meet Him be indeed reckoned by Him as faithful; but what if the passing soul be not found numbered among His chosen ones? How full of exquisite consolations our holy religion is for all who truly love and serve Christ! How full of warning and dread anticipation it ought to be for such as are not in earnest.

Second Thought.—The Master adds as His reason for returning to them and receiving them unto Himself, that where He is they may be also. The penitent thief was probably the first to realize this in person. He found the Lord again in hades, after he had been separated from Him for a little while by His departure before the thief was taken. But wher-

ever He receives His faithful to Himself, after that first departure from them, is paradise, that is, He there reveals Himself in His divine glory. The soul while in this world cannot perceive all the excellence of that glory, yet it is true that when His coming to His faithful ones in prayer and holy sacrament is realized by them, there is a certain sense of the unearthly blessedness of it; there is at least a foretaste of the bliss of paradise at such moments. There will most surely be this for all the faithful when the Master comes for them in the hour of death, to welcome the passing soul. Albeit it is probably true that even in that moment of bliss so great will be the sense of unfitness on the part of the soul for the joy of its Lord, that it will welcome the kindly sentence of temporary banishment from His visible presence into purgatory, that there it may be fashioned to delight in the loveliness of the vision and not be overwhelmed by it.

How unspeakably delightful in that land of purifying will be consciousness on the part of the soul that it has indeed looked upon the Master's face and has been accepted by Him! And then the realization that each moment of its stay in the purging fires is making it more fit, more lovely, that so it may at last be wholly pleasing in His eyes, and go out to be where He

is, with Him and unabashed, in all the ages of eternity.

Third Thought.—The Apostles knew that their Lord was returning to the Father—He had plainly told them that. They knew too that the way of His return was the painful way of the cross. He had also plainly told them that; but it was too hard for them to believe; they could not accept it as fact. It seems equally impossible for Christians in these days to accept His most plain teaching that there is no way for any of us to heaven but the way of the cross.

1. For most of us that means, first, hard things in this present life; pain, sorrow, disappointment, failure, bereavement, misery in many forms. It ought to be plain enough to us all that such things belong to the way of the cross, by which only heaven is to be attained; but we rebel and will not have it so.

2. For every earnest one the way of the cross is the way of sharp temptation, and the bitter life-long struggle with besetting sin, only realized in its terribleness as we get well on in life and find out how far we are yet from victory. We cry out piteously, Why does God let us be so tempted? It is the way by which heaven must be attained.

3. The way of the cross for spiritual natures is ever the way of penance. There must be the shame of confession; there must be the hardness of fasting; there must be the self-denial of the surrender of many sorts of innocent and pleasant things which others enjoy freely. The sacrifice seems too great. Yet remember, it is the way to heaven.

CXXVII.

"Thomas saith unto Him, Lord, we know not whither Thou goest; and how can we know the way? Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. If ye had known me, ye should have known my Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him, and have seen Him."—St. John xiv. 5-7.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "No one can come unto Christ unless the Father draw him; nor can anyone know Christ unless the Father reveal Him: and here we have the reverse also, that none can come unto the Father but by Christ. How mysteriously intermingled with His words are greatest and highest doctrines, the calm and equable flow of the words is from the immeasurable depths below, which human thought cannot fathom. He is not merely the Author of the way, the Teacher of the truth, the Giver of life, but, after some incomprehensible manner, He is Himself the true Way, the very Truth, the true Life. In like manner He is not only the Giver of light, but

is Himself the Light; not only the Author of the resurrection and of life, but He says: *I am the Resurrection and the Life*. So also the kingdom is His after some transcendental and true sense, of which all other kingdoms are shadows. He is *the good Shepherd, the true Vine*, for these things which we behold are but resemblances of the great realities which are in Him. 'This is the way,' says Origen, 'on which one need take nothing for the journey, neither scrip, nor garment, nor staff, nor have our feet clad with sandals, for He Who is Himself the Way is abundantly sufficient of Himself to supply all that is needful; he who travels on this road will find that he needs nothing, being adorned with the wedding garment, with which he must be clothed who is going to the marriage feast; nor shall any evil meet with him on this way.'"

And St. Chrysostom: "*I am the Way*; this is the proof of the *No man cometh unto the Father but by me*; and *the Truth, and the Life*, of this, that these things shall surely be. There is then no falsehood with me, if I am the Truth; if I am the Life also, not even death shall be able to hinder you from coming to me. Besides, I am the Way, ye will need none to lead you by the hand; if I am also the Truth, my words are no falsehoods; if I am also Life,

though ye die ye shall obtain what I have told you. Now His being the Way they both understood and allowed, but the rest they knew not. They did not indeed venture to say that they knew not. Still they gained great consolation from His being the Way. If, saith He, I have sole authority to bring you to the Father, ye shall surely come thither; for neither is it possible to come by any other way."

Stier comments as follows: "First of all Christ is the Way, the way to the Father and the Father's house. This is the only right way concerning which we should ask; the way simply, for it alone leads to the goal. This is the holy way, so plainly now revealed that they who walk therein, though fools, shall not err."

"In connection with this explicit and fundamental truth the Lord thinks at once of the many conflicting ways of error, which are devised of falsehood, and lead to destruction; therefore it follows, *I am the Truth*. He is the entire first and last reality of all the ways of man's return to God and reunion with Him, because He is no other than the eternal Word Who has come down to us from above. But the living Truth is for us life-giving. As the way is, and becomes to us truth, so this truth is, and becomes to us the Life. Our life is a death-life, which leads to death, yea, it is of

itself spiritual death without the life of God in us."

Sadler says: "These words, *No man cometh unto the Father but by me*, set forth opening and closing. They show the open way in Christ; they close up all other ways. They show the Door to God and heaven; but they equally show that there is but one door, one way. No words of Christ are more destructive of modern liberalism than these, for the Word of God here asserts that no man can come of himself to God, or of himself find God—not even the light of his conscience, or his moral sense can bring him to the Father, except so far as that moral sense is to be identified with *the true Light Which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.*"

First Thought.—Very clear and unhesitating is the Lord in His utterance that there is no approach to the Father save through Himself. He is the Way, and there can no other way be thought of. That it may please Him to lead those who have never received the knowledge of the Gospel along some other road than the one He has declared unto us in the revelation given to His Church, does not give license to any of us who know of that revelation to reject

it. There is for us no way of salvation save that made known in the Gospel.

1. He is the Way, that is, we can approach the Father only through discipleship in Christ. There is no reason to suppose that one can study His precepts, draw thence what there is of wisdom and truth in them, and then fashion out a religion for one's self. The Master must be personally followed and imitated. *Men* may not perceive that we are at heart His disciples, daily striving to pattern our lives on His, but *heaven* must see it, or our religion is vain.

2. It is not enough to accept Him as the Way, that is, as Leader and Guide to heaven, for He is also the Truth, and must be acknowledged as such. We may ask, What need is there for truth if we have but to follow in His footsteps? It was this that troubled St. Thomas, and probably the other Apostles also. They could walk by sight so long as their Lord continued outwardly with them; after that they must walk by faith. We have Him not outwardly with us, therefore we too must walk by faith, and that we may have faith the revelation of the truth has been given us. How should we know certainly anything about God save for the truth revealed by our Lord? How should we know anything of our redemption and sanc-

tification, in all their wonderful operation, save for the truth about them made known to us by our Lord? We could know how neither to worship aright, nor to live aright, but for this revelation of the truth from on high. We should be in utter blindness as to our future, utter helplessness in the work of ridding ourselves from sin, had our Lord not come to us as the Truth, revealing to us all these things in order that we might be able to follow Him as the Way to heaven.

3. Yet again, it were profitless for us to look upon Him as the safe Way, and to hearken to His gracious proclamation of the Truth, if upon seeing and hearing we found that we had no strength to do. Many have sought to make their way in their own strength to heaven, and have miserably failed. Many Christians in these days are persuading themselves that they can follow Christ without supernatural participation in His life; without the sacraments, receiving Holy Communion but rarely, utterly ignoring confession. Our Lord is not only the Way and the Truth, He is also the Life. Unless we are ever drawing spiritual vitality from Him through the sacraments we call ourselves His disciples in vain.

Second Thought.—He adds, “If ye had

known me, ye should have known my Father also." Had they not known Him? Aye, as their loving Master, but not as divine. We cannot realize how hard it must have been for the devout Jew, trained in the doctrine of the unity of God as fundamentally and forever hostile to the polytheism of the nations, to accept *two* Persons in the divine Being, the Son along with the Father, and the Son as co-equal with the Father. The Master plainly intimates that He had given them sufficient reason for accepting Him, however, and that they were blameworthy if they did not do so.

We do not stumble at the doctrine of the Trinity, yet we are greatly lacking in our apprehension of the spiritual realities, and in the faith which should be thus developed. Our fault is that we do not in very truth know our Lord, in the intimacy of the personal life. If some be devout enough to know Him in a measure, they must be the first to confess that they yet know Him very imperfectly. We are to study day by day to make Him the aim and object, the ideal of all our living. And we are to strive to develop the devotional side of our life so zealously that we attain more and more the sense of being with Him, having Him always associated with us, so that we cannot forget His

abiding presence: if we know Him, we shall know the Father also.

Third Thought.—The Master foretold that from the time of His passion His faithful ones should know and see the Father, that is, in Himself. His word was wholly fulfilled. Nothing could be finer than the sense of unworldliness, the utter confidence of the Apostles in their Lord after the descent of the Holy Ghost upon them. They were sure then that they were wholly united to Him, that they knew Him, and in Him both knew and saw the Father.

In what sense is the Master's word henceforth to be understood by us? "Henceforth ye know Him," that is, the Father, "and have seen Him"?

1. Every time we have been brought back through honest repentance from a grievous lapse into sin, we have been made to know Him and to see Him. Good were it for us if the "from henceforth" in that case might mean even on to the end of our earthly days; that we should never lapse again!

2. Every time one has made a truly devout Communion, he has come to know and see the Father. If then "from henceforth" might only mean for ever!

3. Indeed whenever the faithful follower of Christ engages in earnest prayer, with mind and heart concentrated on his petition, he knows and sees the Father. If only all his prayer-times were to be of that sort; then, from henceforth, the vision of blessedness should never fail him.

CXXVIII

"Phillip saith unto Him, Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Phillip? he that hath seen me, hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father? Believest thou not that I am in the Father and the Father in me? the words that I speak unto you, I speak not of myself: but the Father That dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe me for the very works' sake."—St. John xiv. 8-11.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: "What He saith is of this kind: 'It is not possible to see either the Father or Me.' For Philip sought the knowledge which is by sight, and since he thought that he had so seen Christ, he desired in like manner to see the Father; but Jesus showeth him that he had not even seen Himself. And if any one here call knowledge sight, I do not contradict him, for, *He that hath known me*, saith Christ, *hath known the Father*. Yet He did not say this, but desiring to establish the consubstantiality, declared, 'He

that knoweth my Essence, knoweth that of the Father also.' And what is this? saith some one; for he who is acquainted with creation knoweth also God. Yet all are acquainted with creation, and have seen it, but all do not know God. Besides let us consider what Philip seeks to see. Is it the wisdom of the Father? Is it His goodness? Not so, but the very whatever God is, the very Essence. To this therefore Christ answereth, *He that hath seen me*. Now he that hath seen the creation, hath not also seen the Essence of God. *If any one hath seen me, he hath seen the Father*, He saith. Now had He been of a different Essence He would not have spoken thus. For one nature is not shown by another. Wherefore He rightly rebuked him, saying, Am I so long with you? Hast thou enjoyed such teaching, hast thou seen miracles wrought with authority, and all belonging to the Godhead, which the Father alone worketh, sins forgiven, secrets published, death retreating, a creation wrought from earth, and hast thou not known me? Because He was clothed with flesh, therefore He said, *Hast thou not known me?* Thou hast seen the Father; seek not to see more; in Him thou hast seen me. If thou hast seen me, be not over-curious; for thou hast also in me known Him."

And Isaac Williams upon the same: "*Be-*

*lievest thou not that I am in the Father, and the Father in me? The words which I speak unto you, I speak not of myself, but the Father Who dwelleth in me, He doeth the works. 'Therefore it is evident,' says St. Augustine, 'that words are works.' And so also the reverse, that works are words. For he that by speech edifies his neighbour, does a good work; and good works are of themselves most powerful language. The same may be said in a higher sense of our Lord's words and works; for His miracles spoke a language, and preached His Gospel; and His actions taught as well as His words: and on the other hand, His parables were equivalent to miracles, from the prophecies, the knowledge, and the mysteries contained therein. And both of them are attributed by Christ to His union with the Father; for, of His works He says; *The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise.* And of His words; *My doctrine is not mine, but His That sent me.* But in a still higher sense the words of God are works, for His Word is the Creator of all things. *Believe me,* speaking now in the plural number to all the disciples, as He had addressed Philip in the preceding verse, *Believe ye me that I am in the Father, and the Father**

in me; but if not, believe me for the very works' sake. The expression is very similar to what our Lord used to the Jews: *If ye believe not me, believe the works, that ye may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in Him.* To believe in Christ as manifesting the Father, without reference to His works, is the highest degree of faith; and the next is to believe Him on account of His works: the good heart believes without evidence; and acceptable also is that which believes with evidence, but the less evidence is required; the higher is the faith evinced."

Hengstenberg says: "Jesus could not possibly have cut off all immediate relation of believers to the Father, and required that the Father be sought only in Himself, if it were not that the being of the Father and the being of the Son perfectly coincided with one another and the whole fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Himself bodily, and the Father had poured into Him all the riches of His Essence. Otherwise it would have been a betrayal both of the Father and of the believers. The Supreme God cannot give His glory to another; and the human heart thirsts for God, for the living God, nor can it be satisfied with any quasi-god, with any mere divine being."

First Thought.—The inquiry of Philip is one that very often finds its counterpart in our own Christian experience. We long for evidence that God is actually and always behind the circumstances of our every-day lives, ordering all things for our good, and never forgetting us, or overlooking our interests for a moment. We say sometimes that we are convinced He has answered this or that prayer we have put up; that He has dealt very wisely and kindly with us on this occasion or that, but there are many more times when He seems to think nothing about us at all, to ignore our interests, to be indifferent to our pains, no matter how piteously we cry to Him for help. Then our faith grows weak, we find it impossible to trust as we are bidden to trust. Our poor human nature wants to be shown the heavenly Father dealing with us as we would like to have Him, in the way that seems to us good. We overlook the fact that our wisdom as to what is good for us must, from the divine point of view, be often foolishness.

So our Lord will not show us the Father after that sort: it would not be the true Father. He will show us the Father as He dealt with Himself, our Master Christ, in the days of His human experiences. No one was ever so flawlessly holy as our Lord, none was ever so greatly

loved by the Father. How then did the Father order His earthly life? Our Lord was poor, too poor at one time even to have a roof over His head; He was oppressed, persecuted, insulted, reviled, treated with the utmost injustice and indignity, and finally put to a shameful death. The Father not only never interfered to save Him from any pain or insult; but actually fore-ordained all of this for Him in His earthly career. One replies, But that was in order that He might bear for us the guilt of our sins. See then of what vast love for us this speaks that the Father should ordain such woes for the Son, that we might be saved! And if some little reproduction of all those woes of His be ordered from on high for our lives, that we may bear an infinitesimal part of the suffering our sins deserve, shall we argue that the heavenly Father is not a truly kind and loving Father? When we see Him in our Lord, and realize what that means, we ought never to have trouble in believing wholly in Him, and resting confidently in His goodness towards us.

Second Thought. — Furthermore our Lord would teach us that all things which the Father works in our lives are just those which He has taught us to look for; the Father's works ever

follow the words of the Son. Those words are infallibly certain therefore, they cannot fail of perfect fulfilment.

1. The Master ceases not to warn us that life in this world is a tremendous and terrible conflict to rescue our souls from the Evil One. We find it impossible to realize the seriousness of it, and cannot believe that its daily events are fraught with such solemn issues as He declares them to be.

It may be that our souls can only escape the pit at the cost of casting away the eye, the right hand, even our very life here. It is not wonderful then that the Father works according to the words of the Son by methods which seem to us very hard, often almost unbearable.

2. The Master lovingly teaches us that the Father has been pleased to furnish us with many helps of supernatural grace, through the sacraments; helps so unearthly that we cannot believe all that is taught us of them, as the Presence of the very Body and Blood of Christ in the Holy Communion, and His fulness of pardon in the confessional. Yet there is not one word of our Lord upon all these matters which is not abundantly fulfilled in the sacramental works which the Father does for our salvation. We protest that the way of the sac-

ramental life is too high and unearthly to be followed by us.

3. The Master insists on it that the Father delights above all things to forgive, and to welcome back His wandering ones. We, alas, will not believe it; we protest that we cannot accept so great a thing because it calls for penitential living on our part, and that is too hard for us.

Third Thought.—It seems to be with a certain sadness that the Lord adds: "Or else believe me for the very works' sake." We will not believe without evidence. Well then:

1. Behold those who have great store of this world's wealth, who can indulge themselves as they please, and gratify their every desire. Are they happy; do they live lives full of glad content? Probably no class of people are more discontented than the very rich. But it has been over and over again demonstrated that to carry out Christ's precepts in hard self-denying living, is to find great content.

2. Is it not our own experience that the happiest moments we have ever known have been moments of prayer and worship; our happiest days those in which we have most completely spent ourselves for others; our

deepest joy the sense of freedom from sin, when we have just conquered some grievous temptation, or just received absolution for some evil thing frankly confessed?

3. Nothing brings about so happy a death as fidelity to the ways of holy Church. Many who know not God die with indifference, but none can so go forth into the other world and find themselves happy there. The works of God always vindicate themselves.

CXXIX.

“Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto my Father. And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it.”—St. John xiv. 12-14.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: “When the Son of man is elevated to the right hand of God, and the Spirit is given, and death is overcome, and the ransom is paid, then will Christ be more powerful in His members, and work greater things through them than He did Himself in the flesh; for belief in Him will be greater, and this is the only limit to the exercise of His almighty power on earth. These greater works were in some degree shown through the Apostles; some of their miracles were greater, as *the shadow of Peter passing by* wrought a greater miracle than that which took place by touching the hem of Christ’s garment. And if the miracles were not in

themselves so abundant and great, yet to produce greater effects with no miracles, or with less, is a great proof of power. The number who believed were far greater, and the sacrifices which they made, through faith, were greater; for the rich young man whom our Lord loved would not give up his riches; but afterwards, many sold their possessions. As St. Augustine says, 'Doth not he do greater works who worketh out his own salvation with fear and trembling, which in him, but not without him, Christ worketh? I should say that this work was certainly greater than heaven and earth, and whatever things are beheld in heaven and earth, which shall pass away.' St. Chrysostom also observes, that although miracles in his time had ceased, yet the conversion of the heart and life which faith evinced, was a greater miracle than any over the powers of nature."

Hengstenberg points out that: "The antithesis in fact is not between Christ and His disciples, but between the humble and the exalted Christ. His disciples accomplish their work only as the organs of the ascended Lord, and by His assistance. The whole power of performance is here expressly placed in the disciples' faith in Christ; in the words *because I go to the Father* it is based upon the glorifica-

tion of Christ, and the omnipotence connected with it. . . . When He went to the Father, the grief of the disciples must be turned into joy, and their despondency into confidence. The departure of their Lord, which seemed to make them helpless, and abandon them an easy prey to the wolves, was the very condition and foundation of their power and of their victory. It made their Master's omnipotence available for them."

And Sadler: "Look at Baptism, the Eucharist, Absolution, the Laying on of hands that men might receive the Holy Ghost. These things are in a higher sphere than miracles, they are mysteries. Miracles only witness to a greater power than that of this world; the mysteries of the Christian Church make men partakers of a higher nature."

Of the words, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it," Isaac Williams says: "Perhaps such promises to prayer, boundless as they are, require no explanation or limit; but of course the Scriptures imply common sense and judgment in the application of them; for if petitions were granted that were not for our good, prayer would in fact not be answered in the better and higher sense. But it may be that in some mysterious way prayer always is answered; even unworthy prayers, but not to

our good; or imperfect prayers to our imperfect edification. 'All these things are,' as St. Chrysostom says, 'spoken to their comfort; for as they could not be otherwise than depressed, in not being capable of understanding our Lord's resurrection, He speaks to them every expression of consolation, and assures them of His continuance in existence; and not only that, but of showing in and by them greater manifestations of His existence and power.'

St. Augustine comments as follows: "Our Lord is Saviour, not only when He doeth what we ask, but also when He doeth it not, since what He seeth to be asked contrary to salvation, it is by not doing it that He rather shows Himself a Saviour. For the physician knoweth what the sick man craves to his health, what against his health; and therefore when we wish that He should do whatsoever we ask, let us not ask as if it mattered not how, but in His name, that is, in the name of the Saviour, let us ask. Then let us not ask contrary to our salvation: which thing if He do, He doeth not as Saviour, which is His name to His believers. For truly to the ungodly He is also a Judge to condemn, Who to the faithful deigneth to be a Saviour. Therefore whatsoever he that believeth in Him shall ask in that name which He is to them that believe in Him, this He

doeth, because He as Saviour doeth it. But if he that believeth in Him does through ignorance ask anything contrary to his salvation, he asks not in the name of the Saviour; seeing He shall not be his Saviour if He shall do that which impedes his salvation."

First Thought.—It is but natural for us to attach more importance to wonders which make for our temporal advantage, than to those which relate only to our spiritual welfare. It seems to us more wonderful that a man with an incurable disease be made well, than that a sinner who has lapsed very grievously be restored by absolution. We know better than that, however, and we ought to strive more and more to gain the spiritual point of view with regard to our lives. Miracles of deliverance from great peril, or of restoration from what was thought to be fatal sickness, are profitless to us if our souls be not saved in the last day. And it is sadly true that earthly prosperity and vigorous health do not incline men to seek the things of God. Just because the all-important miraculous works for us are those of grace, by which our souls are saved, our Lord ascended up on high to bestow gifts upon men, that is, all the treasures of the Holy Ghost, the wealth of sacramental grace. In the operation of the

sacraments, the Church effects much more wonderful works than any of the miracles of healing recorded in the New Testament.

There is always required on our part, for the doing of these greater works, the condition of faith. Our Lord says expressly, "He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do." So He said on another occasion to a poor father who besought Him to heal his child: "If thou canst believe; all things are possible to him that believeth." We do not find our communions the great source of spiritual strength they ought to be to us, because we do not believe as we ought. Genuine belief includes two most important things; the first obedience, in loyally carrying out in our lives everything which our Lord has enjoined, to the utmost of our ability; the second confidence in Him, going on quite fearlessly, without murmur, without doubt, resting unquestioningly upon His word. If we set ourselves to believe on Him after this sort, we shall find that we can in the sacramental life experience greater works than any of the miracles of old time.

Second Thought.—Our Lord tells us that He will do whatsoever is asked in His name, in order that the Father may be glorified in the

Son. For that the Son has been in His human nature raised to the Father's right hand and given supreme authority over all creation as man, especially declares the Father's glory.

1. It declares His power, for the Father delights to behold the Son in His humanity wielding the divine omnipotence for the restoration of the fallen world. The whole universe was disordered by sin, and could not be brought back to its primeval glory by any other than our Lord. He has ascended the throne, the might and the majesty are His, and as He exercises their fullest energy in hearkening to and answering human prayers, the Father is glorified.

2. Not only is He glorified in His power, but also in His wisdom. For in the exercise of our Lord's gracious office of our Mediator, heeding and granting all petitions offered up in His Name, the Father's wisdom is glorified in that He in such amazing fashion as the incarnation, the taking of our flesh by the Eternal Son, planned the restoration of the fallen race of man.

3. Yet again is the Father glorified in His goodness; for such a thing as this were inconceivable, had it not been revealed, that He

should care so much for us as to give His Son even to die for us. Winning by His willing death the right to reign over all creation, our Lord in His humanity, on His throne, responding to all our prayers, declares evermore the glory of the divine love. What a moving and exquisite picture is presented to our souls of the benignity of the everlasting Father, that He delights to be glorified in the gracious rule of our Lord Christ over those who once were rebels deserving only hell.

Third Thought.—It is of the perfect declaration of the Father's glory in the Son that the Master adds, "If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it." No prayer can fail of its proper answer.

If it be a wicked prayer, uttered in rage or hatred, it is certainly answered with judgment upon the utterer, yet even so with the purpose of bringing him to repentance, and, if it may be, the saving of his soul.

If it be a cold, indevout prayer, such as it is to be feared our prayers very often are, He very pitifully makes all allowance for our weakness and blindness, then graciously responds in such sort as may bring us to compunction for our coldness, and an honest effort to do better.

If we pray an unwise prayer, fancying in our

ignorance that we are asking what is good for us, He very gently refashions our petition, that it may come up before Him pleading for that which is truly for our good, and grants it so.

If it be a selfish petition, hurtful to others while apparently benefitting ourselves, He has His own wonderful way of turning it, in His answer, into a blessing for them, and for us an opening of our eyes to our selfishness. Always He so answers every prayer that the result of it may be the bearing of our souls heavenward.

CXXX.

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that He may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; Whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him: but ye know Him; for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."—St. John xiv. 15-17.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Throughout these discourses our Lord continually stops to lay stress on the necessity of keeping the commandments, as the only test of love. And it is also very wonderful how the highest points of doctrine respecting the Father and the Son and the Holy Ghost are interwoven throughout; so as to render them, humanly speaking, replete with difficulties and contradictions, for which no key is furnished but by the Catholic faith; discordances together moulded into a divine harmony, which nothing less than eternity can unravel. Our Lord will ask the Father, and He will give the Comforter; but not so, our Lord Himself will send Him. And He is another

Comforter, for our Lord Himself is called by the same name of Comforter; and yet He is not another, but it is He Himself that is to come; and again He will not send Him, but He Himself will come. All these things to us are not contradictions, but Christian verities: humanly speaking they are such things as cannot be; but divinely speaking, such as cannot be otherwise. And again, as St. Augustine asks, 'How are we to love Him in order to receive Him, for if we have Him not, we cannot love Him? and how can we keep the commandments in order to receive Him, for if we have Him not, we cannot keep the commandments?' Love, he says, 'goes before in us, by which we love Christ, so that by loving Christ, and keeping His commandments, we are rendered worthy to receive the Holy Spirit.' And so it is, for he who loves has the Holy Spirit, and by having Him, becomes worthy to have Him more, and by having Him more, he loves more.

"Even the Spirit of truth, Whom the world cannot receive; for it seeth Him not, neither knoweth Him; but ye know Him, for He abideth with you, and shall be in you. 'For worldly love,' says St. Augustine, 'hath not invisible eyes, by which the Spirit is beheld invisibly, and not otherwise.' And if the Spirit

cannot be discerned by the world, so far as we partake of the world, of worldly opinions, worldly tempers, worldly modes of life, we cannot behold Him, nor will He be manifested to us. 'Observe,' says St. Chrysostom, 'with what expressions He exalts the mention of Him. He said He is another, even as I; He said, He will not leave you; He said, He comes unto you only, even as I have done; He said, He abideth in you.' "

Hengstenberg comments as follows: "The Spirit of truth is the Spirit to Whom the truth belongs, Who possesses it as His own, and Who imparts it to those to whom He is given. The Spirit approves Himself as the Paraclete by imparting the truth to those whose cause He defends in their severe process with the world. Of all weapons this is the noblest. . . . On their possession of this truth rested the confident fidelity to their confession displayed by the confessors of the faith, independent of all external relations, and unshaken even in the presence of death. It was the basis of that joyful acceptance of martyrdom by which the Church made such an impression on the world. He who has a firm hold on the truth, knows that his interests and his person are hidden above, and that all his discomfitures are but the passage to victory. The truth also impresses

the world. From the fall downwards the world has been overrun with lies; yet it never can evade the influence of the truth. Truth makes its sure appeal to the conscience. The world, so long as it maintains itself to be the world, cannot become partaker of the Spirit; for that Spirit it has no receptivity: its eyes, defiled by sin, cannot perceive Him; and therefore it is excluded from the independent possession of the high and noble blessedness of truth, access to which can be obtained only through the Spirit. The truth impresses the world, but proper access to that truth is sealed against the world, because it cannot receive the Spirit."

Cornelius a Lapide says: "Christ will also be the Paraclete of the Apostles and of the faithful, that is, first, their Advocate and Intercessor; secondly, their Exhorter, Inciter, and Impeller; thirdly, their Consoler; for the Greek word Paraclete signifies all these three."

And again, the same writer: "The Holy Ghost is the Spirit of truth, because He is the author of all truth, and the only teacher and bestower of pure and entire truth, Who teaches us all truths necessary to salvation, and frees from all errors."

First Thought.—There are many good Christians who are distressed because of their lack of

love for God. They think of love after the fashion of our earthly affections which often seem to be beyond the control of the will. It is to be noted that the sort of love upon which our Lord here insists is evidenced by obedience; "If ye love me, keep my commandments." The Apostles undoubtedly loved their Lord with very deep affection, yet He was not content with that unless it showed the fruit of obedience. Too often, it is to be feared, that which seems like the most ardent love of Christ on the part of His servants, if put to the test of obedience, would not endure. What then are the commandments which His servants are to keep? He gave two, summing up the ancient decalogue in them; Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and mind and soul and strength, and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. It all comes back again to love; yet the Master is not propounding to us hopeless riddles.

1. To love God after the sort He requires, is the fullest manifestation of obedience. It is the dedication of all one's powers, not one's affections merely, but one's whole being, heart, mind, soul, strength, to His service. To live to do His will, holding one's self in readiness always to carry out such vocation as He is

pleased to assign one. A servant cannot better show his love for his master than by ceaseless devotion to his interests; a subject cannot declare his love for his king better than by giving himself up to serve him, even to the extent of dying for him if called to do so. Loyalty is love.

2. It is plain enough too that genuine love of one's neighbour must manifest itself in works of mercy done for that neighbour; a love which goes not out in unselfish deeds is no true love; and when one beholds unselfish deeds, he does not doubt the love behind them. Therefore whenever we feel disheartened because of our lack of love, let us look to our deeds, whether we are quite genuinely serving God, and doing our duty to our neighbour. Obedience is ever the test of love.

Second Thought.—The Master promises His faithful ones "another Comforter," that is, One Who shall take His place in their lives. Not, however, as if He were to pass out of their lives; but He was no longer here upon earth to be perceived by them as present with them. He would send them the Holy Ghost, the Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, to thus consciously abide with them while they must remain in the flesh. That does not mean that the

Holy Ghost was to be present to their senses, as the Lord had been, yet not the less should He be with them consciously, albeit insensibly. He is the Spirit of truth, that is, of all things that are true and enduring, as opposed to the unreal and transitory things. The things of this present world are untrue things, they seem to be enduring realities, but they are not, they are but phantasms, temporary appearances fulfilling the purpose of God in their creation, but used by Satan to deceive those who serve not God. The Holy Spirit is ever revealing, to those who hearken to Him, the true things.

1. To such folk He makes Himself known in the consciousness they have of spiritual help to resist temptation, a power greater than that of their own wills. This same supernatural help enables them to do things for God and their fellows which they could not hope to do in their own strength. We avail ourselves of this power through prayer.

2. The Spirit also gives to the faithful consciousness of supernatural admission into the realm of the spiritual realities, in the worship of the Church, and pre-eminently in the Blessed Sacrament.

3. Yet again He affords them consciousness

of the peace of pardon obtained in the sacrament of Penance. If this consciousness of the supernatural things be not realized by the disciple, it is because of failure on his part to correspond with the gracious working of the Comforter. Either there is lack of loyalty in our service of Christ, we are not wholly real about it; or there is lack of heart-purity, we are not wholly free from sin.

Third Thought.—The world cares nought for loyalty to Christ, it is indifferent to purity of heart; therefore it cannot receive the Spirit of truth, the revealer of the true things; indeed it does not want the true things, it prefers Satan's lies. But to His loyal ones the Master says of the Holy Ghost, "Ye know Him, for He dwelleth with you, and shall be in you." Do we know the divine Spirit? It must be so if we are genuine disciples of Christ.


He dwelleth with you, in the very atmosphere of our holy religion; in the Church and her services, in the holy sacraments, He loves to dwell, and in them to make Himself known. If we be true to our Christian obligations, we shall not fail to realize the fact of His supernatural presence with us. "He shall be in you," that is, by Baptism and Confirmation. Having been once received He abides in the faithful unless they

drive Him out by mortal sin. So long as we remain in the state of grace we shall not lose the blessed in-dwelling of the Holy Spirit. But it is not enough that we do not permit ourselves to lapse into wilful sin. It is easy for negligences and ignorances to accumulate little by little in the soul until they have stifled its life. We must, if we would retain the presence of the Holy Ghost, be ever striving more and more to be zealous in service and pure of heart.

CXXXI.

"I will not leave you comfortless: I will come to you. Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you."—St. John xiv. 18-20.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: "Fear not, He saith, I said not that I would send you another Comforter, as though I were myself withdrawing from you for ever; I said not that He remaineth with you, as though I should see you no more. For I also myself will come to you, I will not leave you orphans. Because when commencing He said little children, therefore He saith also here, *I will not leave you orphans.* At first then He told them *Whither I go ye shall come;* and *In My Father's house are many mansions;* but here, since that time was long, He giveth them the Spirit; and when, not knowing what it could be of which He spake, they were not sufficiently comforted, *I will not leave you orphans,* He saith; for this they chiefly required. But since the *I will*



come to you, was the saying of one declaring a 'presence,' observe how, in order that they might not again seek for the same kind of presence as before, He did not clearly tell them this thing, but hinted at it; for having said, *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me not*; He added, *but ye see me*. As though He had said, I come indeed to you, but not in the same way as before, ever being with you day by day. And lest they should say, How then saidst Thou to the Jews, *Henceforth ye shall not see me*? He solveth this contradiction by saying, 'to you alone'; for such also is the nature of the Spirit. *Because I live, ye shall live also*. For the cross doth not finally separate us, but only hideth for a little moment; and by life, He seemeth to me to mean not the present only, but the future also."

"*At that day ye shall know me that I am in the Father, and ye in me, and I in you*. What is it that He saith? When I am arisen ye shall know that I am not separated from the Father, but have the same power with Him, and that I am with you continually, which facts proclaim the aid that cometh to you from me, when your enemies are kept down, and you speak boldly, when dangers are removed from your path, when the preaching of the Gospel flourisheth

day by day, when all yield and give ground to the word of true religion."

Isaac Williams also: "Yet a little while and He should have arisen from the dead, but the world should not behold Him, nor have Him manifested to them; He should be seen only by certain *witnesses chosen of God*; for after the resurrection He only showed Himself to His friends, and in His resurrection they should have life; He speaks of Himself in the present tense, for life is ever in Him; but of them in the future, as of life yet to be. And as after the resurrection they alone would see with bodily eyes, so also after the ascension they only would see Him with spiritual eyes, and so beholding Him, and loving Him, though unseen, they would have life in His life: first of all in being risen with Him in Baptism, at a new birth and to a second life; and finally being risen with Him in the great resurrection. And again, in the higher sense *yet a little while*, and the world shall have no more power of discerning the Son of God, for His kingdom of grace will be at an end."

St. Augustine says: "*At that day, saith He, Ye shall know that I am in my Father and ye in me, and I in you. What day but that of which He saith, Ye shall live also. For then it shall be that we shall have power to see that*

which we believe. For even now He is in us, and we in Him; only we believe this now, then we shall also know: although we even now know by believing, but then we shall know by beholding."

Sadler says also: "The greatest fact which the Church has given it to believe and realize is the Oneness of Him Who was crucified with the unseen and eternal God, and our union with Him and with one another in His Body, the Church. This latter union, one must ever remember, is by the Lord made to depend upon our eating His Flesh and drinking His Blood."

First Thought.—Very touching is the Master's word to His beloved Apostles, His little flock, His children: "I will not leave you orphans." He had told them plainly that He must go away to the Father. They naturally desired that they might follow Him there. He was compelled to tell them that such a thing was as yet impossible for them, though it should be the blessed reward of their discipleship hereafter. Then because they were plunged in grief at the thought of losing Him, He promises to send them another Comforter, the Holy Ghost, to be with them in a way of which they should have consciousness. Even so they were not consoled, for they knew Him, and they did not yet

know the Holy Ghost; no other Comforter than their own beloved Master could content their souls. Therefore He, as if won over by the pathos of their appeal, very indulgently promises that He will Himself come back to them; He will not leave them orphans. To view the matter so is to think of it from the human standpoint only. Our Lord needed not to change His plan, predetermined before the foundation of the world, for working out the salvation of His people; but for the Apostles' sakes He led them on step by step to understand at least something of the spiritual life in which they were to live after He should have been taken from them in the natural life, and should have sent down the Holy Ghost to indwell them.

It was to be but a little while before the world should see the Master no more; He was about to remove Himself from the eyes of sense; yet he adds, "But ye see me." He speaks as if they had already attained that vision, and indeed it was theirs from that time on in power, as His gift, but not at first to be recognized in act. For the ascended Lord is truly to be seen by the eye of faith. So St. Stephen saw Him, in the day of his martyrdom; so St. Paul saw Him; and doubtless had we the records we should find that thousands of faithful martyrs

and confessors, in the olden days, were vouchsafed the same joyous vision. It belongs to us quite as genuinely in our devotional life to have from time to time the consciousness of the Master's presence. It is not merely that faith gives us assurance of His abiding with us in the Blessed Sacrament, for we are not always conscious of His nearness there. It is that in the experience of every earnest follower of Christ, there are times, perhaps many times in the case of such as have ripened spiritual experience, in which the conviction of the Lord's nearness is so satisfying, that one holds colloquy with Him naturally, as if actually beholding Him. It does not seem at all strange at the time, but just the plain and simple thing to be expected. There is no reason to fancy the believer self-deceived, when this consciousness of being in the Lord's presence is his; the Lord promises thus to show Himself to our souls that they may spiritually look upon Him, and realize that they are not orphans. We ought, as a regular part of our Christian duty, to cultivate in prayer, in worship, in meditation, the power of spiritual vision. It is amazing to what heights one can climb in thus consciously dwelling in the presence of the Master, if one but persistently exercise himself in so doing.

Second Thought.—Our Lord adds to the gift of vision, the gift of life in the spiritual realm. “Because I live,” He says, “ye shall live also.” Although He died, so far as the natural life is concerned, He taught them that He only died outwardly that He might enter upon a far more wonderful mode of living in the Spirit. The Apostles could not at the time He spake understand the resurrection, but just as soon as they had realized that, they were no longer ignorant of the true and joyous life upon which their Master had entered. The yet more amazing fact was that they were also to have part in the same life; to look out beyond the sad and painful days which now we call life, upon that lovely and unending existence which we associate with the ascended Lord, and to realize that they were even while yet in the flesh inhaling its life-sustaining atmosphere. It is to be noted however that He says, “Because I live, ye shall live also.” Why because? It is plain enough that in so speaking He is assuming that they truly belong to Him, that they are His very members; then they must live where He lives. Unhappily we may cease to be members of Christ who have life in Him, though we have been baptized, if we fail to maintain that life by devout and regular communions; if we fail in loyal obedience to His precepts.

Third Thought.—"In that day," He adds: to what day has He reference? The day of the realization on the part of the believer of the presence of the Lord with him. There might be many such days for all of us in this present world, if we but lived devout lives; yet it is true that only after we have ourselves entered the realm of spiritual existences can we know the perfect fulfilment of the Master's word. He tells us of the three all-important, all-satisfying things we are then to know.

1. First, that He is in His Father, the conviction of our Lord's true divinity and oneness with the Father, for on this all else depends. He is our Master, our Lord, and the realization that He is the Infinite One, absolute in His power, ought to thrill our hearts with a great sense of the glory of our Christian calling, and its limitless possibilities in the ages of eternity.

2. That our Lord and Master should be the Infinite One in no wise profits us except we be in Him, that is, except we be very partakers of His being, and therefore of necessity sharers in His glory. In the day that we realize the spiritual things as those in the midst of which we are living we are to know that we are in Him. What peace that conviction ought to bring to the soul; what patience under every

trial, what sublime confidence as to the outcome of this present life!

3. We are yet further to know "in that day," that He is in us, that the Lord Himself has taken possession of our being, and made it the vehicle of His operation; as the Apostle says, "Now I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." This is to know that Satan cannot prevail against us; this is to know that the Father's perfect will is being wrought in us. What blessedness is ours if we but continue in the state of grace.

CXXXII.

"He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. Judas saith unto Him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that Thou wilt manifest Thyself unto us, and not unto the world? Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's Which sent me."—St. John xiv. 21-24.

Exposition. — St. Chrysostom says: "Seest thou that their soul was close pressed with fear? For Judas was confounded and troubled, and thought that as we see dead men in a dream, so He also would be seen. In order therefore that they might not imagine this, hear what He saith: *I and the Father will come unto him, and make our abode with him.* All but saying, As the Father revealeth Himself, so also do I. And not in this way only He removed the suspicion, but also by saying, *We*

will make our abode with him, a thing which doth not belong to dreams. But observe, I pray you, the disciple confounded, and not daring to say plainly what he desired to say."

Isaac Williams comments as follows: "He speaketh of His sayings in the plural, St. Augustine observes, but in the singular of His Father's word; for He is Himself the Word That proceedeth from the Father. This strict union between the Father and the Son is ever spoken of in a manner to move our affections; for such mysterious doctrine is not to us like some speculative matter, but of concern most intimate. And having spoken of the indwelling of the Father and the Son, He proceeds to speak of the indwelling of the Spirit. And how great must be the redemption of man, and the renewing in him of God's image, when it is not only in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Spirit, that he is baptized; but they, after some real but mysterious sense, come to make their abode in him. And the word abiding must also be understood after a great and divine manner, as signifying continuance in the strongest sense; that our Lord's coming would not be like a vision to vanish away; nor like imaginations or feelings of the mind which come and go *as a guest that tarrieth but a day*; nor like our Lord's continuance with them in

the flesh, but an abiding enduring and eternal."

St. Gregory says: "If thou wouldest prove thy love, show thy works. The love of God is never idle: wherever it is, it doeth great things: if it do not work, it is not."

And again, the same writer: "Into some hearts He cometh, but not to make His abode with them. For some feel compunction for a season and turn to God, but in time of temptation forget that which gave them compunction, and return to their former sins, just as if they had never lamented them. But whoso loveth God truly, into his heart the Lord both comes, and also makes His abode therein: for the love of the Godhead so penetrates him, that no temptation withdraws him from it."

And Sadler: "Judas does not understand that the Lord alludes to that secret spiritual manifestation, which can only be apprehended by the obedient and loving believer. Our Lord would in one sense be manifested unto the world because His Gospel would be preached to all nations, and Judas and his fellow-Apostles would be the means of making it known; but the true effectual manifestation whereby they would see Him Who is invisible, would be only to the man who really loves Him, and so keeps His words."

Cornelius says: "The Holy Trinity comes to

the three powers of the soul which God created after His own image, to inhabit them, and in them reform, renew, and perfect the divine image depraved in them by lusts. To the Father the memory is assigned, because He Himself, conceiving all things out of fruitful remembrance produced the Word and begat the Son. To the Son the understanding is assigned because He was Himself begotten through thought, as the word of the mind, the idea, image, and type of all things. To the Holy Ghost the will is assigned, because He Himself proceeds through the act of the will, that is, of the love of the Father and the Son, as it were the love and bond of Both. The Father therefore reforms the memory, since from it He extirpates the different kinds of vain, base, and unlawful things: and implants various kinds of divine things, that it should not recall any but the things of God, and of His worship; of love, piety, and other virtues. The Son reforms the intellect, that it should think only those things which belong to salvation and holiness. The Holy Ghost reforms the will, that it may love and seek after the same things. Therefore the devout soul continually thinks of itself as the temple of the Holy Trinity, according to the verse, *Ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in*

them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

First Thought.—There is something amazingly beautiful in the way in which our Lord represents the heavenly Father as loving all who love His Son. He cares, of course, with infinite affection for Him, but what are we that the gift of our love or its withholding should be of consequence to the Almighty?

Equally beautiful is the Lord's representation of His pleasure in beholding the love of the Father for His followers. He cares so much for them, that He delights exceedingly in the favour shown them by God. Perhaps it is just because He would have His faithful ones grow ever more lovable in the Father's eyes, that He manifests Himself to them. For this word means literally to cause to appear as in a mirror, that is, reflected. Our Lord delights to be mirrored for His loyal disciples in many ways. As in the poor, when touched by their need one does the compassionate deed for Christ's sake, and suddenly realizes that he has in very truth ministered to the Master. As in the holy Mass, when rapture brings the consciousness of the spiritual things home to one, and he is all at once aware that he is looking into the face of his Lord. As in the ministra-

tions of the clergy, when the sense of the sacramental energy becomes so clear that the soul perceives the Lord Himself to be ministering, and not the human priest. In like manner in the mercies which fill our lives so often and touch our hearts; aye, and in the sorrows and pains which so often are our portion, the devout believer cannot but have it brought home to his inmost being that in all these things which so greatly affect his life here in the body, the Master is revealing Himself, manifesting the reality of His presence.

Second Thought.—The Master does not let the perplexed disciple fancy that the manifestation of Himself which He promises to His beloved ones is any external thing recognizable by the senses. The children of this world know no such experiences. To the believer, however, the manifestation is the very coming of the Blessed Trinity to his soul, and taking it for a temple.

1. To those happy ones who for their obedience to the Master such divine indwelling is vouchsafed, there are granted by the Father unearthly yearnings and celestial aspirations, eager longings for deeper and more absorbed worship, for more concentrated and faith-winged prayer, for more genuine self-denials,

more tireless deeds of mercy. The Father's presence within awakens in the soul all manner of longings of this sort, and fills the heart with a sense of the loveliness of such service, so that one cannot be content with any lesser ambitions, any lower aspirations, but grows more and more ardently to seek thus to serve one's Maker.

2. It is the gracious function of the Son in the soul to formulate and transmute into practical working every unearthly aspiration which the Father's love has caused to spring into being. By Him the believer is celestially guided to perfect his devotional methods, to worship with his whole being, to pray so that no prayer fails to ascend, to meditate so that no distractions shall mar the ingathering of much fruit from the hours spent in colloquy with the Most High. By Him too the disciple is taught to live according to wise ascetic principles, disciplining his soul for celestial use. Nor does the divine Son fail to train all such as love His indwelling to do good works which shall ascend on high without taint of self in them.

3. Then it is of the Holy Spirit to endow the will, through sacramental grace, with resistless energy to bring to good effect all those ideals which the Father has inspired, and the

Son ordered and duly fashioned in the soul, that the service of the loyal follower of Christ may in everything be perfect service in heaven's eyes.

Third Thought.—There is a peril in this life of inspiration through the indwelling of the blessed Three in one's soul. It is the peril of ceasing to love. The instant that love ceases to be the animating principle of our being, all those wonderful things brought into the mind by the Father, moulded by the Son into form for heaven's use, and made effective by the will which the Holy Ghost has quickened, come to a standstill. For such revelations are not mere sayings of our Lord, which men may admire, and then put aside as too unearthly to be practical, but they are the very utterance of the Father Himself, which to disobey is to cut one's self off from all hope of a happy immortality. There must always be, as the background of every worthy life, a genuine love of the Master Christ, and there must be the consciousness of such personal affection for Him. It is the gift of God, indeed, but a gift freely granted to all who truly long for it. We are entrusted with the duty of maintaining this love in our hearts, the duty of keeping the fire once kindled by heaven ever aflame and burn-

ing brightly. Our Lord reminds us that there is no way of doing this but the way of scrupulous fidelity to all His commandments, so far as they have been made known to us. There is no place in the divine religion for perfunctory service. We may not have much power of spiritual imagination, much ability to rise on wings of vision, and realize the spiritual verities as they are; but we are bound always to manifest a great zeal for our Master's service, a tireless enthusiasm in His cause. When that goes, love goes, and when love goes the tabernacling of the Divine Three within the soul must come to an end.

CXXXIII.

"These things have I spoken unto you, being yet present with you. But the Comforter, Which is the Holy Ghost, Whom the Father will send in my name, He shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."—St. John xiv. 25, 26.

Exposition. — Isaac Williams says of the words, *These things have I spoken to you, being yet present with you.* "Here again His words must have been mysterious and difficult to His disciples; for His abiding was of two kinds; the one when He went in and out among them, and they beheld Him with bodily eyes; the other spiritual and not depending on bodily senses, which are perishable. In this His spiritual presence is the fulfilment not only of the desires of the enlightened soul, but also of the blind and instinctive yearnings of our nature. All heathen writers had glimpses or dreams of something internal, that is enduring. In Aristotle it is that wisdom or knowledge of things heavenly, which will be disclosed to him who is made perfect in the moral virtues. In Cicero

it is that learning which depends not on external contingencies, of shipwreck, or fires, or change of place, or spoiling of goods. In Lucretius it is a pure and calm philosophy, which looks unmoved on the changes of the world. They all express the deep want of our nature, which nothing earthly could satisfy; and a hope not extinguished, though blind and dark."

And again the same writer, on the next verse: "As what He had been saying had in great measure been difficult of comprehension, He promises them another Teacher, Who should explain these things, and remind them of His teaching. And He especially calls the Holy Spirit the Comforter, it may be on account of their present sorrow, and the afflictions they were to meet with; for it is in afflictions especially that He is revealed as the Comforter. . . . Nor is it fresh knowledge only which we learn of the Spirit of God, His is the memory of what we do know. His the presence of mind which brings before us His precepts in the hour of need. And in the inspired writers, the Holy Ghost not only revealed, but called to their recollection the things said and done by their Lord. If therefore any in explaining the sacred writers, would suggest imperfections of memory, they must take heed lest they offend against the Holy Spirit."

St. Augustine writes as follows: "When God speaks and teaches anything, it is the Trinity That speaks and teaches; only, being Trinity, there was need to intimate Its several Persons, and that we should both hear them in their distinctness, and understand them in their inseparableness. . . . All the Trinity both speaks and teaches: but unless It were also presented unto us Person by Person, human infirmity would in no sort be able to conceive It. Being therefore altogether inseparable, the Trinity would never be known if It were always spoken of in Its inseparableness: for when we speak of the Father and Son and Holy Ghost, we do not speak of Them in one, albeit they cannot but be in one. But in regard that He hath added, *shall bring all things to your remembrance*, we ought to understand also what we are commanded not to forget, that the most wholesome monitions pertain to the grace by which the Spirit calls to our remembrance."

Burton, quoted in Sadler, says: "He was to teach them all things not as though Christ's teaching was incomplete, but inasmuch as it was imperfectly understood. He was to bring all things to their remembrance not merely as enabling their memories to retain the actual words and matter of their Lord's teaching; but as illuminating their minds to see and hold fast

all that was contained in it, to clear up its difficulties, to carry it out to its consequences, to apply its principles to all particular cases; to expand and connect all its separate oracles into one consistent and complete system of heavenly wisdom."

And Lange: "Objectively all is done by Christ, subjectively the same work is done or applied every day by the Spirit. The fulfilment of this promise of the Holy Spirit to the Apostles, Who was to guide them into the whole truth, and give them the right understanding of Christ's teaching, guarantees their inspiration, sufficiency and authority as witnesses of our Lord, and is abundantly testified by their writings, which carry in themselves their own best evidence, as the shining sun proves his existence to all but the blind."

First Thought.—There ever mingles with the Master's gracious words of instruction to His disciples on this last night of His earthly life, the sense of impending separation, and the sorrow of it. He deeply loves His own, and cannot bear to be taken from them. Yet it is not that He is to be taken from them through any willingness to leave them on His part, but that they will lose courage and faith and so fail to follow on after Him, for they cannot be sep-

arated from Him in spirit save by their own lack of loyalty and trust. The same thing is true in our case now. We know indeed that He is ever present with us in all the ways of holy religion, nevertheless we ourselves fail, through our worldliness, very often through our disobedience, to remain in His presence. We remain with Him a little while at our prayers in the morning, and even so, all too often we are insensible of His nearness, because of our distractions. We find Him in the hour of worship, only perhaps to give Him half-hearted homage, and then to hurry away. If it be that we meet with Him in meditation, or the devout reading of His holy Word, we seem soon to weary of such intercourse with Him, and to long to return to our baser life. It is startling indeed to think how much of His presence we might have in our daily walk, and how little we do have.

It would seem too that He loves us so deeply that He must be always speaking to our souls of high and heavenly and most precious things when He is thus present with us, as if He could not let slip the briefest opportunity of influencing us for good. It is a solemn thought that we are every day losing most precious truths of heaven because of our inattention and lack of interest, at our times of intercourse with our

Lord. We try after we have gone away from service, or after we have finished our meditation, to recall the sweet uplifting thoughts which then we realized, but they are gone.

It is certain, too, that we are very little affected by the things we hear from Him in our times of prayer, and praise, and meditation. We who have such amazing spiritual privileges ought spontaneously to manifest among our neighbours a consciousness of the celestial things we are hearing every day; yet it is rarely so. The Catholic Christian is seldom conspicuous among such as do not believe as he does for his other-worldliness of life and tone. How many of the things which our Lord says to us when He is yet present with us fall upon unheeding ears, unreceptive hearts!

Second Thought.—He knew that a very large part of that which He was telling His Apostles, that Maundy Thursday night, was not appreciated by them. A part of it they could not comprehend till after His resurrection, but the part they might have accepted, had they been more full of faith, they also failed to grasp. Yet the Master is very gracious to them. He will not permit them to lose the words of eternal life through their weakness: He promises them the Holy Ghost, Who shall teach them,

when they shall be better able to comprehend them, the eternal things; and shall give them remembrance of all the wonderful words spoken by their Lord, the meaning of which they had not yet grasped.

Nothing is more wonderful in the history of Christ's religion than the way in which the Holy Ghost has manifestly guided the Church from the very first. The Apostles, after Pentecost, appear at once as new men; no longer unlearned and ignorant, but mighty in speech and knowledge of the Scripture to confound the wisest of their enemies. So the books of the New Testament were written under the guidance of the divine Spirit, He teaching their writers what to say and how to say it, bringing all things to their remembrance, whatsoever the Lord had originally revealed. In like manner, ever since that time, has He guided the Church in her Councils, that as a wise householder she should, at need, bring forth out of her treasure things new and old.

And in the life of each believer all of this may have its counterpart. It is the gracious function of the Holy Ghost to teach us all those things which we ought to know; those things which our Lord has revealed for our edification, but which we have not understood. There is no reason why we should ever have doubts about

the faith or our duty, if we but seek in the ways of the Church the interpretation which the divine Spirit has from the first given to the Lord's words. There is no reason why we should grow discouraged because of our lack of supernatural assurance, for if we indeed seek the help of the Holy Ghost, not one word of all the gracious things our Lord has ever spoken to us when we were unheeding, not one word of the consoling and uplifting things He speaks now for our help whenever we draw near to Him in prayer and worship, shall fail us: for the Holy Ghost delights to bring home to the earnest soul every loving word which the Master has spoken to it, and to make that soul realize the blessedness and the helpfulness of such words.

Third Thought.—Let us not forget the limitation upon the working of the divine Spirit. Our Lord assumes that His followers will welcome with enthusiasm the celestial Comforter, and heartily surrender themselves to His gracious influences. So the holy Apostles did. The Master can hardly admit the possibility of any rejection, on the part of such as profess to follow Him, of the Spirit's working—that were the sin against the Holy Ghost, the unpardonable sin. We are not likely to reject outwardly the outpouring of the Spirit which we receive

through the holy sacraments; but what if we thwart His heavenly operation through irreverent, light, and frivolous treatment of His most holy things? What if we mar the good fruit He would bring to perfection in us, by worldliness, refusing to seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness? What if by failure to be pure in heart we drive Him forth from us? We shall then have mocked not only our Saviour Christ, but His Holy Spirit Who would teach us of Him.

CXXXIV.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. Ye have heard how I said, I go away, and come again to you. If ye loved me, ye would rejoice, because I said I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I."—St. John xiv. 27, 28.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Not as the world uses these words of salutation, or valediction, for the words of Christ are not empty words, but powerful to bestow that which they declare. Not like the peace of the world, without real love, a false peace; but the peace of Christ is that wherewith we are at peace with others, at peace with ourselves, and at peace with God."

And St. Augustine: "What if by His peace He would have us understand the peace which is such as Himself hath, while this present peace which He leaves us in this world is rather to be called ours than His? For He hath nothing warring in Himself, Who hath no sin at all; whereas the peace we now have is such

that therein we must still say, *Forgive us our trespasses*. We have therefore some peace, since we *delight in the law of God after the inner man*: but it is not full, because *we see another law in our members*, warring against the law of our mind. Also one with another we have peace, because we mutually trust that we love one another; but neither is this full, because we do not see the thoughts of the heart, one of another: and we surmise some things concerning ourselves which are not in us, either thinking too well one of another, or too ill. Therefore this, although it was left us by Him, is our peace: for were it not from Him we should not have even such; but not such is that which He Himself hath. If we keep it unto the end such as we have received it, such as He hath we shall have, where nothing from ourselves shall war against us, and nothing shall be hidden in our hearts among ourselves. . . .

Whereas the Lord goes on to say, *Not as the world giveth, give I unto you*; what else is it but, not as men give who love the world, so give I unto you? Who give peace one to another only that without molestation of strifes and wars, they may enjoy, not God, but their friend the world: and when they give peace to the righteous, that cannot be a true peace where

is not true concord; because their hearts are disunited."

Cornelius says: "This peace contains, first, friendship with God: secondly, tranquillity of soul, and serenity in temptations and persecutions: thirdly, mutual concord among themselves. This makes men strong in every danger, and in every distress affords consolation. The Lord leaves this to His own, rather than riches or temporal possessions: for peace excels all the wealth of this world."

Isaac Williams comments as follows: "*Ye have heard how I said, I go away, and come again unto you. Ye know as I have told you that my departure is not for ever; grieve not for me when ye find that I am dead; but still have hope, I shall soon arise. And even then, when I depart from your bodily eyes, remember my promise, that spiritually I will be with you, in that new Name of consolations, the Comforter; and after a little while, as I said unto you, ye shall see me again, that ye also may be where I am. If ye loved me, ye would have rejoiced, because I said, I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I. I am with you in a state of humiliation and affliction, but I have a greatness which is hid with God; and to depart and be with Him is a matter of rejoicing. But here there occurs*

again another difficulty in the words, *for my Father is greater than I*. 'Our Lord,' observes St. Augustine, 'being Himself the Son of God, equal to the Father, in the form of God, emptied Himself, not losing the form of God, but taking the form of a servant. He is greater than Himself also because the form of God, which is not lost, is greater than that of a servant which is taken. Speaking according to this form of a servant, the Son of God saith, *The Father is greater than I*. And speaking according to the form of God, the same Son of God says, *I and the Father are One*. He is One, as He is God the Word; and the Father is greater, as He is the Word made flesh. According to this form of a servant, Christ, as a Child, was inferior to His parents; for it is written, He was subject unto them, as a little one to his elders.'

First Thought.—Our Lord had so instructed His followers that when He was to ascend into heaven He could confidently leave peace as a legacy to them. They had learned of Him the three fundamentals of soul-peace. First, a genuine faith in God, which made them fearless among the vicissitudes of the world. They had come through their association with their Master to realize the spiritual realm as their

heavenly home. Secure in the hope of that they could have peace in this present life, no matter what evils threatened. Then secondly, they had come to know the blessedness of brotherly love, the excellence of gentle words and kindly deeds, of the soft answer that turneth away wrath. He had bidden them love one another, and when brotherly love has taken possession of the soul it must bear fruit in peace. His injunction to them had been, "Have peace one with another." Thirdly, they had been taught the excellence of a good conscience, that which alone can bring about peace within. The Master had ever insisted upon pure and harmless living on the part of His followers. Knowing how free from guilt and clean-hearted they were, He could confidently leave them peace, than which there could be no more precious legacy.

1. He reminds us, however, that the world counterfeits His gift of peace. It is ever promising its votaries peace through trust in its good things rather than in God. It is pitiful to see the way in which believers in Christ allow themselves to be deluded by the world's promise of peace and content through possession of its treasures, that they may pursue wealth as the most desirable of all things. The

world professes to give peace through its friendships and alliances, sought for selfish reasons. So men and nations make peace by mutual agreements, seeking their own advantage always, and never finding any real peace. As for peace of conscience, their short and easy way is to have no conscience; be without scruples; let the basis of conduct be personal interest, and then one need never be disquieted by moral considerations.

2. "Not as the world giveth," says the Master, "give I unto you." What is His peace? First, it is peace which comes from the consciousness that He is our Lord God, and that we have been made partakers of His very being. How can real evil overtake the members of Christ? Our sense of personal union with Him is the peace which He has given us. Secondly, He has given us true peace among our fellow-men because His love for them is shed abroad in our hearts. We must do good to all because we perceive Him in every needy one; we cannot help forgiving because we ourselves have been forgiven; so we must ever be at peace with all men because we are Christ's followers. Thirdly, He has given us peace of conscience through His most gracious gift of pardon. The

sacrament of Penance is the deepest of all fountains of peace.

Second Thought.—One cannot but wonder at the ceaseless solicitude of our Lord for His followers. They are such little children in His sight, such helpless fledgelings, that He cannot bear to withdraw His watchful care for their every need, though it is time for them to learn to fly. So He cries with tenderest love, "Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." It is an exhortation to them, first, not to suffer their hearts to be disquieted with doubts or questionings of any sort; then secondly, to play the man, to be undaunted; there is no place in His service for moral cowards.

But if one be constitutionally of doubting spirit; if one be by nature a moral coward, how does the exhortation help him? He adds to it the ground of confidence. "Ye have heard me say, I go away, and come again to you." It is the conviction that all things are now in His hands, He has Himself taken the helm, therefore all things must of necessity work out His purpose for them. If we but persistently bring it home to our minds that He has gone on high to assume the kingdom, there can remain in us no room for doubt. If we will but daily bring home to ourselves the truth that He never

leaves us even for a moment to work alone, but jealously guards us, there is no place left for moral cowardice. We who know that our Master rules the universe, and never loses sight of the lives of His servants, ought to be absolutely fearless in our actions and words for the right. Yet, alas, how far our Christian practice is from anything like that.

Third Thought.—Again He says to His beloved ones, as in reproach, “If ye loved me, ye would rejoice because I said I go unto the Father: for my Father is greater than I.” The ascension could only mean His promotion, in His human nature, to a more glorious sphere, to a worthier exercise of power. Therefore if they had His interests at heart, rather than their own, His going away ought to cause them unfeigned gladness. We are expressly told in the Gospel that this was the case, that they returned to Jerusalem, after they had seen Him ascend, with great joy. We are naturally so selfish that we find ourselves ever thinking of the divine religion as a thing devised by God to make us happy—which indeed is most true—but we are to be made happy only by ministering to His glory. We ought to think of ourselves as enrolled in His service to work for Him, for the glorifying of His name, for the furthering

of His cause. If we accustom ourselves to think thus about our Christian profession, we shall always rejoice at that which ministers to His glory, no matter what it may cost ourselves. That is the proof of love. Love ever seeks the good of the loved one, a selfish love is not true love; our Lord does not accept such. That the Master has mounted up, in His humanity, to the greater things of the Father, ought to be a matter of great gladness to us; the Ascension should be one of the most joyous of feasts. Yet it involves for us the way of hardness, even as it did for Him. He had first to endure the passion, before He could ascend. We cannot ascend to reign with Him in glory except we here have part in His passion. Let us then never grudge the bearing of life's hard things; by our willing acceptance of them we give the greatest proof of our love.

CXXXV.

"And now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe. Hereafter I will not talk much with you: for the prince of this world cometh, and hath nothing in me. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father gave me commandment, even so I do. Arise, let us go hence."—St. John xiv. 29-31.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "*Hereafter I will not talk much with you*, for the time of my last and great trial is now at hand; *for the prince of this world cometh*, he that as yet has had sway in a world at enmity with God, and found no one full proof against his assaults; but think not from these words that it is a trial in which I am to fall; far otherwise: he cometh, *and hath nothing in me*. For in Christ there was no sin of the will, neither was there sin by nature, for He was born of a pure virgin. Neither therefore was He subject to that curse of death, which was passed on all mankind, that Satan should have the power of death over Him. But His death was a volun-

tary surrender of Himself, from obedience unto the Father even unto death, that all the universe might witness this His perfect obedience. As He adds, *But that the world may know that I love the Father, and as the Father hath commanded me, thus I do.* For as it was written of Him, *I paid them the things I never took,* so He paid them the penalty of death, which He had not incurred. And as our Lord had before said to Judas, *What thou doest, do quickly,* showing His readiness to die, so does He now, on speaking of His death, and the time being fully come, arise and hasten to the voluntary fulfilment, saying, *Arise, let us depart hence."*

St. Chrysostom comments as follows: "By ruler of this world, He meaneth the devil, calling wicked men also by the same name. For he ruleth not heaven and earth, since he would have them subverted, and cast down all things, but he ruleth over those who give themselves up to him. Wherefore He calleth him, *the ruler of the darkness of this world,* in this place again calling evil deeds darkness. What then? doth the devil slay Thee? By no means: *he hath nothing in me.* How then do they kill Thee? Because I will it, and, *that the world may know that I love the Father.* For being not subject, He saith, to death, nor a debtor to

it, I endure it through my love to the Father. This He saith, that He may again rouse their souls, and that they may learn that not unwillingly but willingly He goeth to this thing, and that He doth it despising the devil."

Hengstenberg quotes Quesnel: "When the people of the world follow their passions, they think that they are doing their own will; but in reality they are only, on the one hand, obeying the will of the prince of this world, whose desires and plans they execute; and, on the other, they serve, through the overruling power of God, His plans, and do His will, which is, and must evermore be, supreme over that of His creatures."

And Hengstenberg himself: "The Lord introduces us into the concealed background of the manifestations of His life, the mere external part of which all the world in its melancholy superficiality beholds. Before His profound glance Judas vanishes, the Roman soldiers vanish, the servants of the high priests and Pharisees vanish, and one only remains, whom they, with their superiors, serve as poor unconscious instruments—the prince of this world, who sets in motion their schemes and their aims. This view of the matter gives us to perceive, on the one hand, the full solemnity of the conflict, and urges us to take the whole armour of God, since

in such an assault we can do nothing by our own power; on the other hand, it is full of encouragement, since, when Satan is on the scene, we may be very sure that God will be on the scene likewise."

Of the words, "Rise, let us go hence," Alford says: "These words imply a movement from the table to depart. Probably the rest of the discourse, and the prayer which ends it, were delivered when now all were standing ready to depart. There would be some little pause, in which the preparations for departure would be made."

And Hengstenberg on the same: "The words, *Rise, let us go hence*, contain, in the form of a command to the disciples, the intimation of what was to be done in order that the world might know that He loved the Father, and was obeying His will. They are equivalent to, Therefore I will set forth with you, that I may encounter the assault of the prince of this world."

First Thought.—Few things seem harder to us than to believe on our Lord as ever surely caring for and protecting us. When things go well with us, when no serious troubles appear upon the horizon of our future, we think that we have a great deal of confidence in Him, that

nothing could shake our faith; nevertheless just so soon as the storms threaten us, we lose all our trust, our hearts sink with fear. In the Master's words we find a gentle reproof of our failure in confidence: "Now I have told you before it come to pass, that when it is come to pass, ye might believe." So great is His condescension to our weakness that He represents Himself as satisfied if only we will believe after we have seen the fulfilment of His promises. We ought not to be content with such halting faith as that, however. We should be constantly going back in our meditations and devotional readings to His wonderful promises to the men of old time, and the amazing way in which everything foretold came to pass. When then we find ourselves compassed about with temporal adversity, we do not forget that He has plainly declared we are to expect just this. But He has likewise plainly declared that either deliverance shall speedily come to us, or great spiritual consolations, such as much more than compensate for all the trials we have to bear. Or it may sometimes be, as the result of its sufferings, the soul is to find a happy release from the body with its pains, and an entrance into the joy of its Lord.

The promises which the Master has given us in His holy Word ought to supply us with great-

est confidence that all things which now press upon our lives, are but heaven-sent agencies to work out for us a blessed future; and that it is certain, no matter how long our attainment of that future may be delayed, we shall never find our way towards it barred by any obstacle insurmountable to prayer and loyal use of the divine grace.

Second Thought.—After He has made us to know Him, in conversion, our Lord is wont not to talk much with us. That may often be because He would have us become strong in our dependence upon what He has already so abundantly spoken in His holy Word. In our eagerness to receive personal assurances of His love and favour, we are in danger of belittling the excellence of the things already revealed us.

Very often it may be our own fault that He does not talk much with us, because we allow the prince of this world to allure us away from the heavenly things, and to fill our hearts with longings for transitory joys, to the crowding out of those which are eternal. The prince of this world has nothing in common with our Lord; if he be allowed in our hearts, the Master cannot remain there.

Doubtless however the converse of this is also true. If the prince of this world hath nothing

in us, the Master will talk much with us. Lives free from worldliness find opportunity for many colloquies with our Lord, and He delights to communicate of His goodness to His loyal ones at such times. If indeed it seem to us that although we are striving earnestly to lead unworldly lives, He does not talk much with us, in our times of prayer and meditation and sacrament-using, He is doing for us that which is of much greater importance than the staying of our souls with celestial consolations; He is in His own way working for our salvation, vanquishing our great enemy, and little by little spoiling him of his goods. We ought not to complain of the lack of further spiritual consolations while we have as yet so little availed ourselves of those which have been handed down in all their wealth of satisfying power in the Church.

Third Thought.—Our Lord constantly speaks of doing His wonderful works in order that the world may know His true relationship to the Father, and so know both the Father and Himself. Now His word is that it is His part to arise and go forth from that peaceful room of close communion with God, in order that the world might know of His love for the Father, and the perfection of His obedience.

The lesson ought not to be lost on us. We too should give demonstration to the world of our love and obedience by arising with Him and going forth.

1. We should arise after our quiet times of prayer and meditation, and go forth zealously about our life-work in the world, manifestly inspired with the thought of glorifying our heavenly Father, rather than seeking personal consolation. The spectacle of a genuinely unselfish belief in Christ is ever a moving one to the world, though men affect to despise it, and remain unchanged by it. Many Christians seem to rise no higher in their discipleship than the seeking of help and salvation for themselves.

2. We should arise from the security of our life in Christ to go out to do battle in His cause with the Evil One. That does not mean that we are to rush into temptation in order to demonstrate the strength of our loyalty; but it does mean that we should deliberately take up self-denials and spiritual exercises which will certainly provoke a more vigorous attack of Satan upon our souls—as in Lent-time. So the Master hastened to His passion; and nothing will more powerfully convince the world of the sincerity of our religion than our zeal to deny ourselves for the Master's sake.

CXXXVI.

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the husbandman. Every branch in me that beareth not fruit He taketh away: and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you."—St. John xv. 1-3.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says, "That only is true which abideth for ever; *the true tabernacle* is heaven itself, *the true Bread* is that of which *he that eateth shall never hunger*, and that which gives true life; *the true light* is that which wanes not; *the true riches* are those which cannot be lost; for all material things, being shadowy and perishable, are not real or true. *And my Father is the husbandman.* For it is by His incarnation, and as the Son of man, that our Lord unites us to Himself in this mysterious union, whereby, through His life-giving sacraments, we are *of His Body, of His Flesh, and of His Bones*. In this respect it is, as He said, *my Father is greater than I*. And yet it is He Himself in other places Who is the Hus-

bandman, *I will sing to my well-beloved a song of my Beloved touching His vineyard; my Well-beloved hath a vineyard. And He planted it with the choicest vine;* but it was not the true Vine, for it brought forth wild grapes. He is Himself the Lord of the vineyard, Who hired the labourers into it. Again, He is the Heir, sent to the vineyard. And now, He is Himself the Vine. Yet He is not the Vine, for the parts of which it is composed are His elect. And He says afterwards it is His word that makes clean the branches, therefore He is Himself the Husbandman. Thus throughout these discourses He departs from them, yet He continues with them. He is One with the Father, yet different. He is One with the Comforter, and yet different. He is the Vine and His Father the Husbandman, and yet He and the Father are One. He is the Vine, and yet the Vine are His disciples. The wine is His own Blood, and yet He Himself shall drink this wine with them.

Every branch in me that beareth not fruit, He taketh it away; as Judas who was now gone forth and severed from His Church; *and every branch that beareth fruit, He purgeth it,* by His Word, by His Spirit, by His Providence, by trials and afflictions, as He was about to do with these His beloved Apostles, not willingly, but that it may bear more fruit. He purgeth it

may signify, He maketh it clean; to which the succeeding expressions may allude. *Already ye are clean on account of that word which I have spoken unto you.* Lately He had declared they were clean because they were washed by Him, but now it is His word which hath this purifying power; cutting off that which was dead, as with the pruning-knife of the husbandman; or as the vine itself, filling the decaying parts with life, by the sap passing into the branches of the vine."

St. Augustine says: "Now ye are clean: clean, to-wit, and to be made clean. For were they not clean, they could not have borne fruit: and yet every one that beareth fruit, the Husbandman purgeth that he may bear more fruit. He bears fruit, because he is clean: and that he may bear more fruit, he is purged still. For who in this life is so clean, that he does not need to be cleansed more and more? Where, *If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us: if we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness:* yes to cleanse the clean, that is, the fruitful, that they may be the more fruitful, the more they be clean."

Cornelius notes that the things which He had said to them at the supper were the word

through which they were clean: "By that word the Apostles were purged of a certain ignorance, of a certain vain confidence, of a certain carnal desire to keep Him with them in the flesh, of a certain cowardice. There were many other imperfections which our Lord purged away from His disciples that night."

And Stier: "The pruning-knife of the heavenly vine-dresser is applied to us indeed in that external tribulation and discipline, which none of us can escape; nevertheless the work is done only by internal discipline, and there is a purification which is effected through the word. Even the Apostles, whom now the direct address takes out from among the many branches, were by nature not clean, or not capable of that fruit which the Father now expects from His vine; but their connection with Christ, established through their first faith, has made them branches, and this is their first fundamental purity. . . . There is here indicated the important difference between the first mighty making clean of justification which unites with Christ, and the continuous sanctification unto holiness. By this first election of grace, the wild plant is engrafted into Christ, and made into a branch; without this, fruit could not be spoken of, much less the increase of fruit through purging. Those who are spoken clean

at the beginning are clean; yet there follows on that very account the deepening appropriation of this grace, which in mutual influence results from holiness unto holiness."

First Thought.—There were vines enough in the holy land in those days tended by faithful husbandmen; and the wine cup at the supper furnished suggestion for the parable. Those earthly vines were but figures of the true. They could shelter men with their pleasant shade from the burning heat of the sun, but vine and sun both belong to the transient things which quickly give place to those which are eternal. And the earthly vine could yield the good rich wine which nourishes and makes glad the heart of man; nevertheless neither does that belong to the realm of the real things, which never pass away. There is but one shelter and covert from the burning heat of temptation, and the many grievous things of the life of the soul; that is Christ. And there is but one source of the good wine which sustains and gladdens unto eternal life; that too is Christ: therefore Christ is the true Vine.

The Father orders all in the life work of the Son that the true Vine may shield the sons of men as He will, and supply them with the good

wine of Christ's precious Blood, therefore the Father is the Husbandman.

Moreover we have part in our Lord, if we are truly His members, as branches in the vine. The divine Husbandman is concerned that the branches are both healthily leaved, and well hung with clusters of good grapes. It is His concern to crush those grapes in the press, and cause to flow forth wine that shall bless the nations. Being a very wise and gracious Husbandman, He is not content with us unless our lives, as in Christ, are true coverts and quiet shelters for the weary and oppressed ones of the world; our fellows ought to find in us a transparent honesty of life, and a great faith, inspiring confidence. We ought also to be supplying, as in Christ, good wine, sustaining and gladdening to those with whom we have to do: that means a ready helpfulness of spirit, and a joyousness of heart. Our Lord reveals Himself as the Vine in order that we may both remember that we are branches of that Vine, and that the business of the branches is to shelter from the heat, and to produce abundant fruit.

Second Thought.—Very full of solemn and impressive teaching is the Master's word concerning the Father's dealing as the Vine-dresser.

1. Every branch in Christ that beareth not fruit, He taketh away. It probably does not mean at first the final and hopeless taking away of the judgment after death; but the taking away which the soul brings about of itself, through failure in Christ-likeness. Just so soon as we fail to manifest Christ-likeness, which includes love of God, love of our neighbour, and heart purity, we are by that very fact cut off from the operation of grace. The life of Christ cannot flow through the veins of our spiritual nature when we are unfaithful to Him: then we are taken away from our place in the Vine, because we are no longer in the state of grace. The amazing part of God's dealing with us is, that just so long as we remain in this world, we may, by honest repentance, be restored to the state of grace.

2. Every branch in Christ that beareth fruit, that is, that manifests Christ-likeness, the Father purgeth that it may bring forth more fruit. The best of us are but poor fruit bearers, therefore we are ever in need of the celestial purge. How often God sends upon His children grievous temporal ills, poverty, misfortune, bereavement. At such times we should feel that He is purging us from worldliness, that we may bring forth more fruit. It is hard to undergo the

shame and pain of making confession, yet upon this He insists that He may purge us from sensuality.

Or, it may be, He afflicts us with cruel humiliations at the hands of our fellows, causing us to suffer wrong, to be spoken against, perhaps falsely, to have our good name taken away, and all without redress. This too, is His purging, to take away our pride.

Third Thought.—To His faithful ones on that first Maundy Thursday the Master said, “Now ye are clean through the word which I have spoken unto you.” They had been so uplifted spiritually by the sweetness of His doctrine and the loveliness of His personality, that they were very truly Christ-like of heart. It is a reminder to us that the surest way to become Christ-like is to dwell much with Christ in prayer: as upon some mountain-top, where the air is fully charged with life-giving oxygen; hearkening to His words as He speaks inwardly to every soul which heartily strives to keep in touch with Him; most of all through regular and devout use of the sacraments. Nevertheless even those chosen ones, so clean that day, needed great purging before they were able to bear all the fruit the Master sought in their lives. Further trials did not fail them as

they went on. They were to endure the anguish and the doubt of Gethsemane, the dismay of the arrest by the band of Judas, the horror of the conviction that their Lord had really been apprehended and was about to be put to death. But as the result of all this purging they were very clean again on the joyous day of the resurrection, yet more so when they were permitted to be witnesses of the ascension. Howbeit even after that, during all the remainder of their earthly lives, it was needful that they should still be cleansed and purged before they could enter into the blessedness of the saints; and there was always some further "word" for this. Let us not forget that no matter how clean soever we may feel ourselves to be in our zeal for Christ-likeness, nothing but much purging at God's hands can make us all that He would have us to be.

CXXXVII.

"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. I am the Vine, ye are the branches: he that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered; and men gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned."—St. John xv. 4-6.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "Lest any should imagine that a branch can at least bear some little fruit, therefore, having said, *The same bringeth forth much fruit*, He adds not, *because without me ye can do little but ye can do nothing*. Be it little then, or be it much, without Him it cannot be done, without Whom nothing can be done. Because though if the branch bear little, the Husbandman purgeth it that it may bear more, yet, except it remain in the Vine and live by the root, it cannot bear any fruit, how much or how little soever, of itself. . . . As the Lord saith by the prophet Ezekiel,

the wood of the vine being cut off is profitable for no uses of the husbandman, is had in no account for the works of the carpenter. One of these two is fit for the vine-branch: either vine or fire; if it be not in the vine, it shall be in the fire."

Isaac Williams comments as follows: "*Abide in me and I in you*; how is this communion but by prayer, by keeping His word, by good works, by His holy sacraments, by His sanctifying grace, by the peace of God keeping the heart, by faith exercised in love? *Without me ye can do nothing*. It is not said, as St. Augustine observes, ye can do little, but *ye can do nothing*. As soon as we begin to pride ourselves on anything whatever of our own, so certainly do we lose Thee, O Thou our true Life; and in humiliation only do we derive of Thee, and keep Thy Spirit within us; for Thy strength is perfected in our weakness. Hence the greatest perfection in man is that which saith, *Nevertheless I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh, I live by the faith of the Son of God, Who loved me, and gave Himself for me*.

If any one abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered. He is already not only devoid of fruit, but, as the unfruitful fig-tree, is withered, devoid of all sap of the vine.

O wonderful and mysterious life-giving union! He is still a branch, but a dead branch; no longer by prayer and communion with God doth he draw life, and then he is cut off from the Body; but the end is yet to come. *And they gather them, and cast them into the fire,* the soul that can never die, and the fire that can never be quenched."

Stier says: "After the Lord has first given Himself to them, He now makes His abiding in them actually dependent on their abiding in Him. We can abide in Him only while we eat and drink—Christ does not repeat the saying about mutual abiding until He has instituted the ordinance for the eating and drinking His Flesh and Blood."

And Sadler: "Are we to deny that virtue and goodness are not real, and so far acceptable to God, even in the heathen? Assuredly not. But what the Lord means by fruit are those Christian good works and holy dispositions which support and further the kingdom of God. God has planted a vine of grace in the world, that better, nobler, higher, purer fruits of goodness and righteousness may be produced in it than in the old degenerate vine of unrenewed and unaided human nature, and what we have to see to is, that our own works, and the works of all we can influence, are purified and con-

secrated to God by being done in the grace of Christ, the true Vine."

And again, the same writer: "He that abides not in Christ, first, is cast forth, not, of course, by death, or by open excommunication, but by the secret act or decree of God. This severs him from Christ as the Fountain of grace, and then he withers, just as the branch in the actual vine withers if the sap cannot flow into it. He may go on making a profession, speaking well, hearing preaching, receiving sacraments with outward reverence, but in the eye of God, and not seldom in the eyes of his fellow Christians, he withers, and is spiritually dead, and there is at last the fearful end, *They gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned.*"

First Thought.—Our Lord accents for us in the strongest fashion the necessity of abiding in Him, and He in us, the vital union of the believer with his Master. It is to be feared that we have but slight conception of all that is implied in this. It is certain that we have been brought into vital union with Him by our baptism, and we are fain to think that so long as we regularly practise the Christian life, we abide in Him and He in us. Yet it is manifest enough that no outward fidelity to Christ is worth anything without heart-loyalty. We do

not abide in Him unless He is the conscious End of our being, unless we are daily striving to live for His glory, our supreme aim in life the doing of His will. In other words we do not abide in Him unless we love Him above all persons and things, and are ready to surrender all persons and things, rather than give Him up. The proof that we do love after this sort is afforded by the effort we make day by day to pattern our lives after His, by our earnestness in imitating Him. Unless we are consciously striving day by day to follow Him in our words, in our behaviour, in our deeds, we are not abiding in Him.

But that sort of loyalty is not enough, because we are constantly falling. We do not succeed in carrying out our good intention, and therefore just because we lapse so often it is needful that we be ever repenting of our falls, if we would abide in Him. To keep heart-pure involves frequent resort to the fountain of absolution; it is idle to suppose we can remain in vital union with our Lord if we permit sin to remain upon our consciences. There ought to be in our lives the greatest zeal to purge ourselves of all our sins. Nor is the sacrament of Penance the only one needed in order to abide in our Lord. Holy Communion is equally fundamental; and when we remember that the par-

taking of the divine Food is but a curse to our souls if we come to it unworthily, it is easy to see how great and serious responsibility is laid upon us by the Lord's injunction, "Abide in me, and I in you." Who is sufficient for such things?

Second Thought.—If we thus abide in Christ, He tells us that we by doing so bring forth much fruit. A great deal of the fruit which our lives bear, whether it be good or evil, will not be manifest until the last day; therefore it is very encouraging to have His assurance that if we abide in Him we are bringing forth much fruit, good fruit in heaven's eyes, though with all humility we think of ourselves as unfruitful branches. The fruit of God is of many types and differing sorts. There is the glorifying of His Name, the worthy rendering of His worship. He loves to receive praise, homage, and thanksgiving at our hands. There ought to be the conscious effort to make every time of private prayer, every act of public worship, a distinct offering of service. This is much more of course than exquisitely rendered music, and worthy ceremonial, and deep outward genuflexions, though these too He delights to receive at our hands. The heart praise must go along with the lip praise, and the contrite

spirit with the bended knee. We all know this well enough, yet how little attention we give to it in practice!

Not less important is the life-fruit borne through good done to our fellow men. The love of one's neighbour is the second of the two great commandments, but our Lord says it is like unto the first. It is certain there will be no fruit more searchingly demanded of us in the day of our judgment than that of the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. Yet again in the depths of our souls must the fruits of the Spirit be borne, "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance."

All the ardour of devout worship, all the prodigality of giving to the poor which any man's life may manifest, will not be reckoned God's good fruit, if the soul is not also being sanctified by the Spirit within.

The Master adds: "Without me ye can do nothing." He is speaking to His disciples, to those who have tasted of and known the good things of God; therefore His words must mean something very solemn. One who has once believed, and been admitted into the life of Christ, if he fall away from the obligations of that life, can do nothing good in God's eyes. He may persuade himself that the exemplary morality of a life without dependence upon the sacra-

ments, is worth something; but he is utterly deceived if he so think. Any surrender of devout practices, which means a less perfect abiding in Christ, precludes the possibility of fruit-bearing.

Third Thought.—Our Lord seems to speak very sternly when He foretells the fate of such as abide not in Him. They are cast forth as worthless branches; the vine will not give them of its nourishment any more, for they have ceased to bear fruit. How can one know whether or not he has been cast forth as a worthless branch? One is almost sure to find in such a case that he has lost interest in his religion, that his prayers are a burden to him, church-going a thing he gets out of whenever he can find a plausible pretext, the sacraments empty forms which he feels no scruple in disregarding. If one perceive himself to be in such a frame of mind, let him take warning from the Lord's words. There is grave reason to suspect that he has been cast forth as a branch, that his spiritual life has already begun to dry up, that he is withering. Happily the withering branch may be renewed by divine grace, and reunited to Christ by genuine repentance, so long as this world lasts. But if not—then the rest of the awful sentence which

is irrevocable follows, "They gather them, and cast them into the fire, and they are burned." That is the burning which never ceases, that fire is unquenchable.

CXXXVIII.

"If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you. Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples. As the Father hath loved me, so have I loved you: continue ye in my love. If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love."—St. John xv. 7-10.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "It is one thing that we wish because we are in Christ, another that we wish because we are in this world. Thus, sometimes from our abiding in this world the thought steals into our minds to ask that which we know not to be inexpedient for us. But God forbid that it should be done for us if we abide in Christ, Who doeth, when we ask, only that which is expedient for us. Abiding therefore in Him, while His words abide in us, we shall ask what we will, and it shall be done for us. For if we ask, and it be not done, the thing we ask is not such as comes of our abiding in Him, nor of His words abid-

ing in us; but it is only of lust, and weakness of the flesh, which is not in Him, and in which His words abide not."

Of the words, "Even as I have kept my Father's commandments," St. Chrysostom says: "Certainly the Lawgiver would not be subject to commandments. Seest thou that here also, as I am always saying, this is declared because of the infirmity of the hearers? For He chiefly speaketh to their suspicions, and by every means showeth them that they are in safety, and that their enemies are being lost, and that all, whatever they have, they have from the Son, and that if they show forth a pure life, none shall ever have mastery over them. And observe that He discourseth with them in a very authoritative manner, for He said not, Abide in the love of my Father, but in mine; then, lest they should say, When Thou hast set us at war with all men, Thou leavest us, and departest, He showeth that He doth not leave them, but is so joined unto them if they will, as the branch in the vine. Then lest from confidence they should become supine, He saith not that the blessing cannot be removed if they are slack-minded. And in order not to refer the action to Himself, and so make them more apt to fall, He saith, *Herein is my Father glorified*. For everywhere

He manifesteth His own and His Father's love towards them."

And Isaac Williams: "This it is which St. Paul testified from experience when he said, *I can do all things through Christ Which strengtheneth me.* They can desire surely nothing but that which is good, for they partake of the Vine, and the Spirit within them cannot ask in vain. It is He That asks, and He That hears, and He That bestows. *In this is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit.* What unspeakable condescension is it that even God Himself should deign to receive glory from His creatures, and be glorified in their obedience! This it is in which our meek Saviour did Himself rejoice, that in His perfect obedience His Father should be glorified. *So shall ye be my disciples.* So shall they learn of Him Who was obedient even unto death, from that unutterable love to the Father by which He loved His will rather than His own; and such should be the love of Christ also to those who would obey Him; yea, such had it already been."

"*Abide ye in my love.* To what divine height of contemplation shall we raise our souls, in order to abide in that love? It is not needful that we ascend up to heaven, nor descend into the deep; for it is in the daily path open to all,

and in the heart of all. *If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love.* With such wonderful and mysterious condescension is such an obedience hallowed, even unto the resemblance of a divine union!"

Hengstenberg says: "*To if ye abide in me is appended, and my words abide in you,* in order to impress it upon the disciples that they must attach supreme importance to the words of the Lord, and give them all their due. It was through His words that they came to Christ, and their retaining His words that would decide their abiding in Him. . He who deals frivolously or capriciously with Christ's words, who partially rejects them, or evades them by one-sided interpretation, deceives himself if he thinks that he abides in Christ."

And the Bible Commentary on the same: "The petitions of the true disciples are echoes (so to speak) of Christ's words. As He has spoken so they speak. Their prayer is only some fragment of His teaching transformed into a supplication, and so it will necessarily be heard."

Bengel says: "*So shall ye be my disciples.* The word *disciples* must be taken in a weighty sense, as *disciples worthy of me.* The founda-

tion of Christianity is to become, as the summit of Christianity is to be, a disciple of Christ."

First Thought.—Before this the Master's word was, "Abide in me, and I in you": now it is, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you." The meaning is not different however, for His words and Himself are one. Even as He is the Word of the Father, so because He is the Truth all His words are but the declaration of His being. But for us discipleship must be looked for as the result of His words abiding in us. His outward presence is removed from us, and although He is truly present with us still in His sacraments, yet His sacraments may be regarded as a part of His words. With His appointed words only may water be validly used for Baptism; by His words are the bread and wine consecrated; in His words is the penitent absolved.

Because we are dependent upon His words our discipleship is declared first by our faith, then by our obedience. Faith accepts His words, and never doubts. Our discipleship is the poor thing that it is because we do not heartily believe Him, we have not courage enough to trust when things look to us dark and hopeless. He had often to rebuke the Twelve as "ye of little faith." They might bet-

ter have been pardoned their lack of faith than we.

Not less must our discipleship be manifested by unhesitating obedience. What are we to obey? All His words. We are not to fancy that only those recorded for us in the Scripture are of obligation—though indeed where shall we find a believer who heartily accepts and strives to put into practice whatsoever is taught in Holy Writ—the complete words of Christ are only to be found in the tradition of the Church. To her the Apostles committed all things they had heard from the Master's lips. We only abide in Him when all His words as set before us in the teachings of the Church abide in us, manifested as so abiding by our unwavering faith, our unquestioning obedience: then our prayers cannot fail of answer.

Second Thought.—The Lord admits us to great dignity when He sets before us as the aim of our discipleship the glorifying of the Father. What are we that our labours should avail to promote the great work of God in the restoration of the universe to its primeval glory? It is true that we cannot too strongly insist upon our personal insignificance, yet He will not permit us to dwell upon small things. We belong to Him, if we abide in Him, we have share in

His work, and that cannot be insignificant. We have our part to do in the bringing in of the eternal kingdom of glory. And how? By bearing much fruit. In our fruit-bearing it is He Who gives the increase, but it is we who are called upon to sow the seed. The harvest may be out of all natural proportion to the seed sown—that is the wonder of the divine working, as when the five loaves freely given were made sufficient for the feeding of five thousand men—nevertheless we must have our part in it through sowing the seed by which the world is to be regenerated, the Father glorified. Therefore though our most diligent works through a whole life-time seem outwardly but infinitesimal in their furtherance of the cause of our Lord, if we abide in Him they represent much fruit in heaven's rating of the harvest.

With great delight in their loving service which He foresees, the Master cries, "So shall ye be my disciples." If His disciples, their life is a life of unselfish service; with no thought for anything other than the doing of God's will in honouring Him and succouring their fellows; though remembering always that these great works are only to be done by such as have first qualified themselves for engaging in them by the daily pursuit of personal holiness: one cannot serve God without a clean heart.

Third Thought.—He reminds us further that we shall never rise to so great discipleship if we fail to continue in His love. He has freely shed upon us that love; we must respond to it as unreservedly. It is of the first importance that we strive to keep our hearts ever warm with keen enthusiasm for Him and all that belongs to His work in the world. We sigh and answer, Who can thus keep a heart ever warm with devotion to Christ's cause? His answer is very plain: "If ye keep my commandments ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in His love." It is the old story which He never wearies of iterating—obedience; for obedience is the fruit of love. There must be ceaseless recurrence in our lives to the type of living which He has enjoined, and which He Himself so marvellously illustrated.

1. Doing justly; the law of absolute integrity, honour, truth, purity, the strict rendering to everyone his due, so that there be no flaw in our righteousness.

2. Loving mercy; the law of compassion, tender-hearted succouring of the needy, large-minded forgivingness, a genuine love of our neighbour.

3. Walking humbly with God; the self-for-

getting meekness which distinguished our Lord among all others, without which no one can be a true disciple. All who strive thus to keep His commandments find a very real love of Him ever developing in their hearts.

CXXXIX. ,

"These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends."—St. John xv. 11-13.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "His joy on behalf of our salvation which joy was always in Him when He foreknew and predestinated us, began to be in us when He called us; and this joy we may with reason call ours, because with it we shall be blessed: but this our joy increases and grows, and by persevering holds on to its own perfection. It begins then in the faith of them that are born again, it will be fulfilled in the reward of them that rise again.

It is of this that I take to be said, *These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.* For mine was always full, even before ye were called, when ye were foreknown of me to be called; and it is made to be in you, when ye

come to be that which I foreknew concerning you: but, that your joy may be full; because ye shall be blessed, which ye are not yet; as ye are created, who once were not in being."

And again the same writer: "*This is my commandment, That ye love one another.* Is His one only commandment this concerning the love wherewith we love one another? Is there not another greater commandment, that we love God? Yea, or hath God given us commandments concerning love only, so that we need look for no others? Surely the Apostle commendeth to our regard three things saying, *But there remain faith, hope, charity; these three; but the greatest of these is charity.* And though in charity, that is, in love, those two precepts are shut up together; yet it is said to be the greatest, not the only one. Then concerning faith how many things are commanded us, how many concerning hope? Who is able to collect them all, who can suffice to enumerate them? Yea, but let us look at that saying of the same Apostle, Charity is the fulfilling of the Law. Then where charity is, what can be wanting? Where it is not, what can be profitable? A demon believes, yet loves not; none loves that believes not. It is in vain indeed, but yet it is possible, for him to hope for pardon who does not love: but none can despair that loves. There-

fore where love is there of necessity is faith and hope, and where love of neighbour, there is necessarily love of God likewise."

St. Gregory also, as follows: "The highest, the only proof of love, is to love our adversary; as did the Truth Himself, Who while He suffered on the cross, showed His love for His persecutors: *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.* Of which love the consummation is given in the words: *Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.* Our Lord came to die for His enemies, but He says that He is going to lay down His life for His friends, to show us that by loving we are able to gain over our enemies, so that they who persecute us are by anticipation our friends."

Isaac Williams says: "What is Thy joy, O most meek and divine Saviour, and when is Thy joy? Is it only on this dark hour of Thy deep humiliation, and of Thine approaching agony, that Thou speakest of Thy joy? And when is this Thy joy to be with Thy chosen, but in this hour of their desertion and bereavement. Thus it is in persecution alone spiritual joy is spoken of, and in every shape of human sorrow, divine consolations break forth.

"This is my commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath

no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends; that is, for those whom he loves; for we loved not Him, but were enemies to Him, when He died for us. This is love, and this is joy, if it is to be found in this world; all other pleasures grow less as we grow older but this alone of doing good; for it is partaking of all-enduring blessedness, so far as it partakes of this pattern. The deep and hidden music of these words is the harmony of heaven, which this beloved disciple drunk of so deeply that he could never think or speak of anything but this love."

First Thought.—It must ever fill the devout soul with admiring wonder to contemplate the love of God for man. For man is so utterly insignificant of himself, he only becomes admirable when glorified by the transforming love of God. Here our Lord speaks of His joy in His followers; He Who has all the countless hosts of the spotless angels to delight in finds joy in poor fallen humanity. He has had joy in the human race from eternity, for it was ever in the divine counsels to call man into being when the fulness of the time should come. What is true of the whole race is equally true of every individual in it. Our Lord had joy in every one of us from the beginning, before the world

was; only after we were actually brought into being was that joy threatened. It received great increment in the day in which we were baptized, and brought into vital union with Him. It has had rare days of special delight, it may be, in our life's progress, days in which we prayed with unwonted earnestness, or worshipped with heartier devotion; days in which we received the Blessed Sacrament with penitence, faith, and true charity; the day of our confirmation, the day of our first confession. There have, unhappily, been days in most lives in which our Lord's joy, so long centred in us, could not remain in us; days of wilful sin, of conscious rebellion against the divine will. There have, happily, been days also in many of our lives in which the joy of our Lord in us has advanced by leaps and bounds, days of true penitence after our sins, when frank confession has restored us to the state of grace. He Himself tells us of the joy there is in heaven over one sinner that repents.

It is a blessed thing indeed for the soul to have the joy of the Lord remain in it. He tells us that He has spoken the words which the Scripture records for us to this end. Doubtless He alludes especially to His discourse at that last supper, but we may well include in His meaning all the words He had spoken to

His followers of warning and of encouragement. There is no better school for perpetuating the divine joy in our lives than that of devout dwelling upon the wonderful revelation of the spiritual life which our Lord has vouchsafed to give us. It is all so unworldly, so celestial in type. If we but earnestly strive to keep the world above, with all its lessons, ever before us, it will not be very hard to preserve within us the joy of the Master.

Second Thought.—He adds, “And that your joy might be full.” It is not full joy yet, that can only be when at last, after our long pilgrimage, we come out upon the delectable mountains, and behold the Beatific Vision, according to that which the Psalmist says, “In Thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at Thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore.” Yet if our joy is some day to be full, it must have its beginnings here in this present world. Several things go to constitute it.

1. There must be within the soul the consciousness of spiritual aim, a certain vision of the celestial things, realized more and more perfectly as one goes on in one's pilgrimage.

2. There must be a good conscience; no joy can be worth anything for the believer so long

as there is in it the sense of any taint of sin ; so long as any guilt in the soul remains unfessed.

3. There must be unwavering confidence in the power of grace. Then no matter how often one falls, he knows that there is still hope of rescue, and his joy remains in him.

Old age ought to have in it more of joy than youth, for our joy should always be increasing. As we go down towards the grave the consciousness of the treasure which we possess, and of which death cannot rob us, ought to become amazingly satisfying.

We may well believe that in purgatory there is greater joy than we have ever experienced here, in the certainty that one is on the high road to heaven, and is every day, just as the result of one's pains, being made more gloriously fit for heaven.

Third Thought.—The Master recurs to the commandment, "That ye love one another, as I have loved you." For it is impossible to love God as He would be loved if we love not our fellow-man. So St. John says elsewhere, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar; for he who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God Whom he hath not seen." God has been pleased to

identify our race so with Himself, through our Lord's incarnation, that we cannot love Him without loving those who are His; as very members of Christ, they are a part of Christ. Nor can we perfectly love our neighbour without also loving God. For whatsoever is truly lovable in human life is the fruit of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. We do not love the *whole* being of our fellow-Christian if we love not his spiritual nature, and that is to love God in him. So in loving one another as our Lord has loved us, we of necessity love God with all the heart, and mind, and soul, and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. He makes the test of it our readiness to lay down our lives for our friends. That means, first, that we insist upon it in our hearts that all who belong to Christ are our friends; and secondly, that we so live in self-forgetting love, that our lives are ever ready to be laid down for our neighbours. This may often be a more tremendous testing of our love than a speedy martyrdom would be. Unless we are quite genuine in our willingness always to sacrifice ourselves for our fellows, there can be no worthy laying down of our lives. Where there is such honest self-oblation, Christ's joy remains in us, and our joy must surely advance to its perfect fulness.

CXL.

"Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth I call you not servants; for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth: but I have called you friends; for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain: that whatsoever ye shall ask of the Father in my name, He may give it you."—St. John xv. 14-16.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "He establisheth the name of friend in such sort that He taketh away the name of servant: not so that in the one both it and the other remain, but so that upon surcease of the one the other succeedeth. What is this? Is it so that where we have done the Lord's commandments we shall be no more servants? Shall we thenceforth be no more servants when we shall have become good servants? And yet who can contradict the Truth Which saith, *Henceforth I call you not servants.* O marvellous thing! Whereas we cannot serve except we do the Lord's command-

ments, how by doing His commandments shall we be no more servants? If I shall be no more servant by doing the commandment, and, except I do the commandment, I cannot serve; it follows that by serving I shall be no servant!

. . . As there are two kinds of fear, which make two sorts of persons that fear, so are there two kinds of servitude, which make two sorts of servants. There is a fear which perfect love casteth out, and there is another fear, which is chaste, abiding for ever and ever. . . . Seeing then He hath given us power to become sons of God, let us be not servants but sons: that in a certain wonderful and ineffable but yet true manner, it may be possible for us to be servants and yet not servants; servants, to-wit, by the chaste fear, to which pertaineth the servant that entereth into the joy of his Lord; but not servants in regard to the fear that is to be cast out, to which pertaineth the servant that abideth not in the house for ever."

And St. Gregory: "All things which He heard from the Father, which He wished to be made known to His servants; the joys of spiritual love, the pleasures of our heavenly country, which He impresses daily on our minds by the inspiration of His love. For while we love the heavenly things we hear, we know them by loving because love is itself knowledge. He

hath made all things known unto them then, because being withdrawn from earthly desires, they burned with the fire of divine love."

Isaac Williams comments as follows: "But who are they whom Thou callest Thy friends? *Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* And already as Thy friends, in anticipation of their obedience, dost Thou call them Thine beforehand, in the greatness of Thy love. *No longer do I call you servants;* no longer, for the Jews were as servants; but the servant abideth not in the house for ever; *for the servant knoweth not what his lord doeth,* as the Jews, who knew not the meaning of their laws and ordinances; *but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you.* He that obeys as a servant shall come to know the will; and he that knoweth the will shall be as a friend. And though He and the Father are One, yet in great condescension does He speak of what He had seen and what He had heard of the Father. *Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you, that ye should go and bear fruit, and that your fruit may remain.* This His choice laid no constraint on their will, that they should not fall, for He had said before, *Have I not chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil.* Nor had He

chosen them for sensible assurances, or rest and pride in such exceeding great privileges, but for bearing fruit; such fruit as might endure for ever: and that it might bring them in the present time to the great blessedness of being near to God. *That whatsoever ye ask the Father in my Name, He may give it you.* This is union with Christ and nearness to Him, that His Name may have such power."

Hengstenberg says: "By their fruit they would show themselves to be genuine disciples of Christ; and to such the Father can deny nothing which they ask in the Name of the Son. That every offence against love affects injuriously the offering of acceptable prayer had been many times impressed upon them by their Master."

And Sadler: "He chose them that they should go and bring forth fruit—the fruit of their toil and labour being the Christian Church; and that their fruit should remain, which it does in the permanency and indestructibility of the same Church. . . . The Lord's choice of them was not only that they should bear permanent fruit, but that they should put up prevailing prayer. The first and greatest instance of this was, that their united prayers brought down the Promise of the Father on the day of Pentecost."

First Thought.—There is something exquisitely touching in the way in which our Lord here condescends to His followers in taking them up out of the position of servants into that of His trusted and intimate friends. In His love He minimizes the infinite distance which separates Him by nature from them. He dwells upon His humanity; He puts the matter as if He were but an upper servant, whom the Lord of them all had set over his fellow-servants. He does not seem to fear their being spoiled by their exaltation. Of necessity He always acts with infinite wisdom, therefore it must be for our good that we are thus promoted, He would not expose us to profitless temptation. Nevertheless we do well to remember that His goodness to us in thus lifting us up to the rank of His friends exposes us to certain very real dangers.

1. There is the danger of losing sight of the supreme honour and worship which are ever His due from us. St. Peter once so far forgot this as to “rebuke” his Master for foretelling His approaching death. It is well for us to delight in the intimacy of friendship which He so graciously accords us, but never to presume on it by taking His name lightly upon our lips, or

feeling free to behave ourselves without deep outward reverence in His presence.

2. There is danger lest the thought of our exaltation as the intimates of the Master make us proud, self-sufficient, or without humility, in our bearing towards our fellow-disciples. Nothing is more common than to see devout people, who in truth greatly love our Lord, hard, critical, and uncharitable towards their neighbours. No personal uplifting at our Lord's hands releases any of us, not even the greatest of spiritual potentates, from gentle and humble bearing towards all men.

3. There is danger in the consciousness of the great favour shown us by our Lord of our becoming lax and indifferent in our service. He has made us so free, imposed upon us so few obligations, left our duty so largely to our own sense of honour, to our love for Himself, that in our miserable selfishness we are too often ready to dispense ourselves from the things we are most solemnly bound to do, and to avail ourselves of our liberty as His friends to assert our independence of His service.

Second Thought.—The Master chose His Apostles out of the rest of mankind, by a very wonderful and special choosing; then He or-

dained them, endowing them with His own authority, and supplying them with the fulness of grace to execute all the work of their mission. But is it true in any like sense that He has chosen us, and not we Him? It was certainly of our own will that we became His servants in the Church, deliberately making choice between Him and the world—our Christian profession cannot mean less than this. It is to be remembered however that although His predestination does not overthrow our free agency, it is nevertheless a very real thing. He ordered all the circumstances of our lives, which caused our parents to be such as they were, our temporal conditions what they have been, and now are. He brought it about that we should hear His call to our souls, and be moved by it. Ever since our baptism, which in most cases was without any volition of our own, His supernatural grace has worked within us. In a very real sense then it is true that He has chosen us, not we Him.

In a very sad sense it is often true also. He has chosen us to know the wonderful things of the divine revelation, while we have remained indifferent to the celestial teaching; it has not interested us. He has chosen us to be the recipients of His grace, to have many and very direct opportunities of receiving that grace to

our soul's infinite profit; but we have cared little for our communions, perhaps have not availed ourselves at all of confession. He has lovingly presented us with the cross, choosing us as once He chose Simon the Cyrenian to bear it after Him; but we have refused to take it up, being unwilling to endure a life of hardness and self-denial for His sake.

Third Thought.—In what amazing fashion was everything the Lord here promises His Apostles fulfilled! When was ever such abundant fruit of human labour seen as followed the preaching of the Gospel; when was ever such enduring work done as the building up of the Church, which is to stand everlastingly!

Nor can one forget the might of prayer wherewith the faithful have ever since wrought the greatest of miracles.

We have very full and real part in the Master's promise also. If we but remain loyal to our choosing by Him, we shall find ourselves truly endowed with worthy vocations in His service, given abundant work to do for Him: we shall go our life-way through the world bringing forth fruit. It may not always be apparent to ourselves; it is well for the safeguarding of our humility that our success be not too evident to ourselves; but evident

enough to angels, and often to our fellow-men. It is fruit, too, that remains; our gracious Master never suffers any of the loyal work of His friends to be wasted. And where our feeble efforts seem powerless to do what should be done, through prayer in the Master's name the disciple becomes omnipotent. .

CXLI.

"These things I command you, that ye love one another. If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you."—St. John xv. 17-19.

Exposition.—Isaac Williams says: "Ever again, and more than ten times does He return to the mention of keeping the commandments. And still the sweet close of these more than heavenly harmonies is love: all is wrought for obedience; and all obedience is love; and love is still to go on in obedience till *ye love as I have loved you*. . . . And what shall be the consolation of the sorrowing disciples under the hatred of the world? That hatred and enmity shall itself be a token of their likeness to Thee, and a pledge of Thy Spirit dwelling within them. *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you*. Blessed were they who so lived as to be worthy of that hate; and blessed were they in that outward resem-

blance to their Lord; for what to them would have been a deeper sorrow than to have been loved by that world that hated their Saviour?"

St. Augustine comments as follows: "The world is said to love itself in that it loves the unrighteousness by which it is unrighteous: and again it is said to hate itself, in that it loves the thing that hurts it. Therefore it hates in itself its nature, loves its corruption: hates the thing it was made by the goodness of God, loves the thing that was made in it by free-will. Whence we also are both forbidden to love the world (if we understand aright), and are bidden to love it: forbidden, where it is said *Love not the world*; bidden, where it is said, *Love your enemies*: these are the world that hates us. Therefore we are both forbidden to love in it what it loves in itself, and bidden to love in it what it hates in itself, to-wit, God's handiwork, and the divers consolations of His goodness. For indeed it is that which mars it that we are forbidden to love, and are bidden to love what it is by nature, while the world loves itself that which mars it and hates its own nature: so may we both love and hate it in a right manner, while it loves and hates itself in a wrong."

And St. Gregory: "The dispraise of the perverse is our praise. There is nothing wrong in


not pleasing those who do not please God. For no one can by one and the same act please God and the enemies of God. He proves himself no friend to God, who pleases His enemy; and he whose soul is in subjection to the truth, will have to contend with the enemies of that truth."

Stier says: "A loving heart would fain find or create love everywhere: to be ungratified in that desire, and more than that, to be hated, is a hard and bitter lot; the bitterest ingredient in all affliction. Therefore the Lord discreetly and faithfully prepares them for this, that they may not marvel at this destiny or count it a strange thing. They must for their own part love and preserve peace, do nothing which they may omit without sin, to provoke or warrant the hatred of the world: therefore He speaks deliberately with an *if* concerning this lamentable and unavoidable circumstance. In His further explanation it appears plain that to be hated of the world will be a necessary consequence, and an inseparable mark of His true discipleship: nevertheless He speaks here not so much for the condemnation and warning of those gentle ones who do not disoblige the world, as for the pure encouragement of oppressed and discomfited souls. The most conscientious and tender Christian is the most likely to fall into the temptation of seeking the

cause of the world's hatred solely in himself, of thinking that if he were perfect in goodness, love, humility, and meekness, the evil of the world must needs be overcome. This again might lead to a false compliance, and a renunciation of the rigour of His word. Against such trouble and such temptation the Lord arms us beforehand: He teaches us to perceive and bethink ourselves that he who will not be holily loved, and return our love, cannot even by God Himself be overcome and constrained: He sets before us as proof the pattern and testimony of His own treatment in this evil world.

. . . It is the manner of the world to seek its own; therefore where and when it loves, it is the character of this false so-called love, which in its selfishness contradicts the nature of all true love, that it in others essentially seeks only its own. . . . Although worldly men often quarrel fiercely, these enmities are only about particular conflicting interests. In the great essentials there is always perfect accord among them. Even he who holds with the world must not expect for his own person only love and peace; it is only where opposition to Christ and the kingdom of God is concerned, that the world will recognize its principle in him, and altogether hold his side."

First Thought.—The Master continues as at the first to lay extraordinary stress upon love of one another among His followers. He declares that He has told them all the wonderful things of this last discourse in order that they may love one another. He has revealed to them His own relation to the Father, and His union with themselves. He has declared the delights of the land where He is about to prepare their mansions for them, that He may enkindle in them a great longing for that celestial country; but whatever He has said has had as its object the awakening of brotherly love in their hearts. For there can be no true development of the spiritual nature without this. The fundamental fact of all such development is unselfishness. There may exist in the world what men call unselfishness, where there is no loyalty to Christ. Philanthropy itself apart from the divine religion is but negative unselfishness, it involves no real surrender of one's self-love. Our Lord calls for love of the brethren as such, because that means the recognition of Himself in them. We are to deal with them as seeing Him in them, and we are to deal with them as He would in our place. It is the ever-present Christ-atmosphere which manifests the sort of love He calls for on our part.



1. There must first be the personal humility, the sincere desire to be least of all and servant of all, a humility begotten of a sense of the Master's greatness and one's own unworthiness because of sin. In such humility there can be no thought of one's rights or one's honour; the soul is dead to all that.

2. Then, in order that we may love the brethren as He would have us, there must be unhesitating forgiveness towards everyone who has wronged us; the sort of forgiveness our Lord manifested on the cross when He made excuse for His murderers and besought His Father to pardon them.

3. There must be further the absolutely ungrudging giving of whatsoever we have to the needy brother, counting it a genuine privilege to deprive ourselves even of what it is most reasonable we should have, in order that our brother's need may be supplied. Such love of the brethren renders us very dear to Christ.

Second Thought.—To live in the spirit of Christ's religion is always to provoke the opposition of the world. It seems well nigh impossible for believers to learn this lesson; we long to be liked and admired, to have all men speak well of us, and we persist very often that this or that type of Christianity is better than

that of the Catholic Church, just because it is more popular with the world. What does our Lord mean by the world in this connection? All those who follow the prince of this world, that is, Satan, consciously or unconsciously acknowledging his sovereignty. There may be many not yet redeemed from that Evil One by the Gospel, who serve him unwillingly, desiring greatly to be free; such are not enemies of Christ. But all who have the opportunity of salvation brought them, and reject it, desiring to live only for the things of this present life, belong to the world of which our Lord speaks; although they may live what men call harmless and beautiful lives. The world being subject to Satan inevitably hates what he hates, and he ceaselessly hates our Lord. If we be true to our Lord, Satan must hate us, and it is certain that he will bring his hatred to bear against us at the hands of the world, in the way best calculated to afflict us. We are not now likely to be actively persecuted for our religion, but the world to-day delights to sneer at Catholic teachings and practices; it ridicules them; it does its best to hinder others from accepting the faith; it never ceases to write and speak against our Lord as divine, and to demonstrate, so far as it can, the blindness and folly of such as believe Him to be so. There is presented to

us, by the Evil One, the pleasing delusion that if we but surrender the strictness of our creed and way of life, we shall become popular and win many souls; and those who do thus emasculate the old Gospel often find enthusiastic following. Let us not forget that the world from the first hated the Master, and we have His word for it that if we be loyal to Him, it will hate us also, if not personally, at least in our belief and Christian practice.

Third Thought.—There is something very glorious about the way in which our Lord speaks of the unworldliness of His disciples: "But because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you." Could He say that of us to-day? We are not of the world in one sense, because He has chosen us out of it to place us in His Church; we are members of Christ, the children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. But is it true, in the inner life of the heart, that we are not of the world? Have we no affection for it, no longing for its good things; are we set in mind and desire altogether upon the things eternal? It is not wonderful that the world is very polite and genial in its bearing towards us, if we be in heart still loyal to it.

1. Let us not forget that our Lord has called us out of the world. That must mean something very real and very noble—what does it mean actually in our case?

2. And then that He has called us out of the world implies that except He had so called us we were still there. It is His grace, not our merit, which has given us hope of better things. Therefore how utterly despicable we are if we hold not fast to Him even at the cost of the world's hatred!

CXLII.

“Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name’s sake, because they know not Him That sent me.”—St. John xv. 20, 21.

Exposition.—St. Chrysostom says: “*The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.*” He showed that in this point they would be most His imitators. For while Christ was in the flesh, men had war with Him, but when He was translated, the battle came in the next place upon them. Then because owing to their fewness they were terrified at being about to encounter the attack of so great a multitude, He raiseth their souls by telling them that it was an especial subject of joy that they were hated by them, ‘For so ye shall share my sufferings. Ye should not therefore be troubled, for ye are not better than I,’ as I before told you, *The servant is not greater than his Lord.* Then

there is also a third source of consolation, that the Father also is insulted together with them: *But all these things will they do unto you for my Name's sake, because they know not Him That sent me.* That is, they insult Him also."

Isaac Williams paraphrases thus: "Do not expect it otherwise, do not desire to have a portion different from what mine is. *Remember the word which I spake unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.* It is a principle unavoidable, and not a mere accidental contingency. Nor think that you are to succeed in having your words attended to more than mine have been. *If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also.* Yea, it is even my Name in you, and my Example in you, that will make you to partake of their hate. *But all these things will they do unto you for my Name's sake, because they know not Him That sent me.* This was the same divine charity that prayed for them, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.*"

Stier comments as follows: "It is the Lord's will that we should forget no word ever spoken by Him. Yet word here has a specific meaning, a subtle significance not always found in it—that the Lord reckons here as His own

honour the being hated and persecuted, and suffering. He experienced all this not merely as first but as Lord and Head. Consequently the consolation has an undertone of demand, that they should rejoice and feel themselves honoured in being counted worthy to suffer as He suffered. Should we be, would we be, less than He? Thus it belongs to the perfection of a disciple, who would be as his Master, that he should encounter the hatred of the world."

And again upon the words "If they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also." As the Lord uses the expression your word, He seems to say these two things: Let not their hatred cause you to keep back this word; but also, oppose the world with your word alone, do nothing more, for the rest suffer patiently, as I have suffered, all that may be done unto you."

And Hengstenberg: "The Saviour had opened up to the disciples a consolatory aspect of the sufferings which they had to expect from the world: they were to suffer for His sake, that is, as Christians. We perceive the strength of this consolation when we read in the Acts, *But they went from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His Name.* But the consolation was not yet perfect. There remained yet

another important stumbling-block. Did not the matter stand as all the authorities, and the immense preponderance of the people, thought: on the one side Jesus and His disciples, on the other side God and the Jews? This stumbling-block our Lord takes out of the way. The persecution which the world or the Jews directed against the disciples for the Name of Jesus, rested upon ignorance of that God in Whom they boasted. For as Jesus had approved Himself as the 'Sent' of God by His words, full of the Spirit and of Life, their hatred of Him was a hatred of God His Father, as well as of Christ Himself. And all the more as His works, such as no other had done, had gone hand in hand with His words. The matter therefore stood thus: on the one side the disciples, Christ, and the Father; on the other the world, with its prince, and the Jews, who by their rejection of Christ had been transformed from the Church of God into the synagogue of Satan. Who would not rejoice to suffer at the hands of the world, in the fellowship of Christ and of the Father?"

First Thought.—It ought not to be necessary for our Lord to have to call it to our minds that His servants may hardly expect to find their life free from persecution and opposition

when His was so full of both these. And yet it seems to be almost impossible for us to learn this lesson. The best and most devoted believers are constantly heard lamenting their failure as His disciples, convinced that they must have displeased Him and sinned in some grievous way, because they find themselves suffering affliction. Did not our Master have more affliction to bear than ever any of His followers? Are the servants to be greater than their Lord?

It is true that we do not have to suffer very much persecution for His sake in these days; very likely we should be better Christians if we did. Yet wherever there is genuine loyalty of discipleship some measure of persecution is to be looked for; it is the law of His kingdom. There is an invincible hatred on the part of those who obey the prince of this world towards the supernatural faith of the Gospel, and its strict moral standards. He who stedfastly upholds these is bound to be disliked for so doing, to incur the enmity of the world in so far as he is of consequence enough to be noticed by it, and to have such malevolence shown him as is in the world's power. He may often be called upon to endure no little ridicule and contempt if not obloquy.

Again, we feel that our circumstances per-

secute us very often. We cannot understand why everything seems to go against us at times, to make our lives hard, and to hinder us in no small degree from the good works and devout exercises we are longing to engage in. Very likely Satan is allowed in some measure to afflict us in temporal matters, as he was permitted to assail Job in the olden time, yet we ought not to forget that the Evil One can have no power against us except by God's permission, therefore our temporal afflictions are graciously tolerated in heaven in order that we may have the privilege of enduring as our Lord endured.

It is certain that Satan grievously persecutes the servants of Christ with temptation. Yet this also is allowed on high, and we are not to complain. It may often be, however, that our temptations are but the consequence of our own folly and wilfulness. We give Satan his occasion to persecute us through our disregard of the plain warnings of our Lord.

Second Thought.—Is it not true also that we find ourselves hurt and discouraged because men keep not our saying? That perhaps is especially a grievance of Christ's ministers. They labour and study to prepare edifying sermons, praying much over them, and seeking in every

way to make them what they should be as proclamations of the Gospel message; yet men hearken to them listlessly, and find them dull and uninteresting; they are not in any wise moved by them. Is it not true, O faint-hearted preacher of the Word, that men failed to keep the saying of the Master also?

Every true follower of Christ, though no ordained preacher, has a message to deliver to the world. We are so full of our message, if we be in earnest, that we cannot but feel deeply its beauty and its power. It must appeal to all that is best in the human heart. We go in and out among our fellows, trying with tact and very graciously to sow the good seeds of truth and uprightness, but with no result. Men do not want our saying; they will not keep it. Was not our Master's experience the same? In our case the ill-success may be due to lack of prayer, or of fasting, or of good works, on our part, in connection with the witness we bear with our lips. Too often we give the lie to our good words by our unholy lives. Yet after all, no matter how faithfully we strive to deliver the message we are likely to fail of a hearing. The world does not want Christ's saying, it will not keep it. Our part is to go on bearing witness however. We are not to plead, Men will not receive us nor hear our word; it is nevertheless

to be spoken, boldly, unhesitatingly, tirelessly: then the result is to be left with God. He works very wonderfully, and has His own way of bringing the truth home to souls which seemed not so much as even to hearken to the preacher. If the Master be content to let His words fall upon the wayside, the stony places, and the thorns, we need not be discouraged if our witness for Him seem unheeded.

Third Thought.—There is danger lest the disciple become embittered by the ill-success of his message-bearing, and look with contempt or anger upon those who refuse to receive his saying. Our Lord very graciously makes excuse for those who reject Him, "They know not Him That sent me," even as upon the cross He pleaded on behalf of His crucifiers, "They know not what they do." He seems to say that did the children of this world but know the Father, in all His goodness, and glory, and truth, they could not but believe. Surely there is a lesson for ourselves in this, and a very solemn warning. We do know the Father; it is the glory of our faith that He has been declared to us in all the fulness of grace and truth by our Lord. It ought then to be impossible for us ever to sin, under such circumstances, it ought to be impossible ever to doubt,

or to become discouraged about anything. And yet how far we are from any such unwavering discipleship! Happily there is the other side to it. We are too little yet, and too feeble in the faith to grasp the truth about the heavenly Father, in all the revelation of Him which our Lord has given us. Therefore He very pityingly makes excuse for us also, that we are unable to know Him as we ought. But the remembrance of our own great need of the divine compassion ought to make us very patient with those who will not be influenced for good by us.

CXLIII.

"If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloke for their sin. He that hateth me, hateth my Father also. If I had not done among them the works that none other man did, they had not had sin: but now have they both seen and hated, both me and my Father. But this cometh to pass, that the word might be fulfilled that is written in their law, They hated me without a cause."—St John xv. 22-25.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "What meaneth it, *If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin?* Were the Jews without sin before Christ came to them in the flesh? Who so utterly foolish as to say this? But under the general name He would have to be understood not all sin, but one great sin in particular. For this is the sin by which all sins are held fast, which sin, if one have it not, all sins are forgiven him: and this is, that they did not believe in Christ, Who came on purpose to be believed on. This sin of course they would not have had, if He had not come.

For in fact, His coming, as saving as it is to the believing, so deadly is it made to the unbelieving. . . . But what means this, that after saying, *If I had not done works in them,* He presently adds, *which none other man did?* For none among the works of Christ seem to be greater than the raising of the dead: which thing we know the ancient prophets also did. Elias did this; Eliseus did it, both while he lived in this flesh, and when he lay buried in the tomb. . . . It is evident also that some saints too have done certain wonderful works *which none other man did.* True, but to heal with so great power so many defects, and illnesses, and grievances of mortal men, this we read concerning none soever of the men of old. . . . The works He meant were not such as only to cause wonder, but also to confer manifest healing; for which benefits they ought to have returned love, not hatred. It does indeed surpass all miracles of all besides Him, that He was born of a virgin, that for Him alone it was possible both in His conception and in His birth to keep unhurt the integrity of His mother's body: but this was neither done before them nor in them. For to the truth of this miracle, not by beholding in common with them, but by discipleship distinct from them, the Apostles attained. And then, that on the

third day, in the flesh wherein He was put to death, He from the tomb brought back Himself alive, and, thenceforth nevermore to die, with it ascended into heaven, this surpasseth all His other doings: but neither was this done in the Jews or before them; moreover He had not yet done this when He said, *If I had not done in them works which none other did.* Doubtless then the works are those miracles of healing which He showed in their diseases, miracles so great as none bestowed on them before, and with this He reproacheth them, when He goes on to say, But now have they both seen and hated both me and my Father."

Stier comments as follows: "It is plainly enough to be observed how the Lord here places Himself by a great distinction above all other messengers speaking from God who had come before Him; as also, that while all previous persecution and opposition might have been forgiven, the rejection of Himself alone definitely precluded all salvation."

And again, of the words, "They hated me without a cause": "This is absolutely true only of the sacred Son of God, Who hath nothing in Him which could provoke hatred; if His types or successors can appropriate the same complaint, it can only be in so far as they are in Him."

And Sadler, upon the same: "These words, *They hated me without a cause*, are to be found in a strictly Messianic Psalm (the 69th), and were fulfilled in Christ, that is, completely and absolutely accomplished in Him, as they were in no other: for all other men have something in them which calls out at times our anger, or our opposition, or our dislike; but in the Lord Jesus there was nothing but pure love, earnest desire to do good, patient endurance of wrong; and so, as it could be said of no other being, *They hated Him without a cause.*"

First Thought.—We are sometimes disposed vainly to plead, when life is very hard, that we wish we had never been made to know the truth of our Lord's religion. That brings with it such fearful responsibilities, and the soul weighed down by them, and by the consciousness of its own failure cries, Would that one might have been permitted to grow up in a heathen land; then one would not have been answerable for all that now is of obligation, and is so crushing a load to bear.

It is little short of blasphemy to speak in such fashion, to tolerate in the heart such thoughts. There is no blessing so great as that of redemption, there is nothing for which the saints in heaven pour forth such ceaseless

thanksgiving. We are at least guilty of the basest ingratitude if we rejoice not every day because of the fact of having been brought into the Church. Nevertheless we ought not to minimize the responsibility which accompanies our privilege. If we had never heard the truth, if we had never been vouchsafed the means of grace, we should have had some excuse for the shortcomings of our lives. Now we have none.

We plead our inability to believe, the things of revelation are too hard for our human understanding. But we ought to remember that we have no doubt in our minds that the doctrine delivered by the Church is genuinely Christ's doctrine. No matter how hard it seems to our understanding we cannot suppose that it is not true. To the Jews of old His teaching was attested abundantly by His works. It is not the question whether or not His miracles were more amazing than those of the Prophets who had preceded Him. The abundance of those miracles, the gracious character of them, and the circumstances under which they were wrought, plainly pointed our Lord out as the looked-for Messiah. The Jewish rulers had no valid excuse for rejecting Him. And in our case the doctrines of the Church are abundantly authenticated by the sacramental system supplied for the sanctification of the faithful. If

there were no other force to move us to the devout following of our Lord, gratitude for all the wealth of His grace thus showered upon us ought of necessity to do so.

It is certain that we could devote ourselves much more heartily than we do to His service, the keeping of His commandments, the extension of His kingdom. Loyalty always stimulates faith.

It is certain too that we could much more earnestly avail ourselves of the sacraments than we now do. Therefore if we remain unbelieving, we are without excuse in His sight.

Second Thought.—The reason of the hatred the Jews felt for our Lord was His rebuke of their covetousness and self-seeking, His exposure of their hypocrisy. They were full of rage against Him for putting them to shame in the eyes of the people. It was not that they were unable to see His heavenly-mindedness, His dutiful subjection in all things to the will of the Father; these things were evident enough in His words and bearing; and so it came to pass that in hating Him, they hated His Father also.

We shrink with horror from the thought that we could ever hate our Lord, yet it is not difficult to see that if we turn away from and refuse

to accept His teachings, we are in opposition to Him, and all opposition to Him, if it be not taken away by repentance while we are yet in this world, must eventuate in everlasting hatred both of Himself and His Father.

1. There are those among believers who refuse the hardness of the cross, the restraint upon their lives which Christ's religion puts, the threatenings of judgment, and of hell for the finally impenitent. They maintain that they would like to get back to a simple natural religion, of faithfulness to the heavenly Father in moral uprightness, without all the formalities of the Catholic system.

2. There are those who will not submit to the darkness in which they are called upon to walk by faith in Christ. They insist that they must see their way before them if they are to obey Him; they reject the obligation to walk by faith not by sight.

3. There are those who will not serve Him because He requires them to bear poverty, and sickness, the privations of this present world. They insist upon a measure of temporal consolation being vouchsafed them if they are to be His disciples. This sort of rebellion against the rule of the gentle Christ easily grows into hatred of Him, where it is allowed unchecked,

and hatred of Him as He reveals Himself is hatred of the Father.

Third Thought.—The Master had already told His followers that they must look for the hatred of the world; it hated Him, therefore it must hate them if they be loyal to Him. Now He adds that it hates Him without a cause. It ought also to be true of us that the languid half-hatred which the world feels for the followers of Christ should be causeless. Is it so in our case?

1. So far as the contempt and obloquy of our unbelieving neighbours are concerned, it is certain that there is much ground afforded them in our lives. Our behaviour and our speech are too often very unlovely, very un-Christlike. Men do not have to accuse us falsely when they charge us with gross inconsistency, with unworthy deeds and motives. We cannot too earnestly strive to take away out of our lives this reproach of evident disloyalty to our Master.

2. The prince of this world, Satan, hates us with undying hatred so long as we are trying to be faithful to Christ. It is certain, however, that we ourselves afford Him occasion to exercise his malice all too frequently; it is very largely our own fault that we are so persistently

assailed by temptation as we are, or rather that we so often fall under temptation. We are ever ready to trifle with sin; we know the danger of this and that association and practice, nevertheless we persist in gratifying our inclinations, and trusting that we shall be strong enough to resist when the actual sin appears. We persistently refuse to be watchful, as if we fancied the tempter were not always subtle, always on the alert. Too often also after we have fallen we but half repent.

CXLIV.

"But when the Comforter is come, Whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, Which proceedeth from the Father, He shall testify of me: and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning."—St. John xv. 26, 27.

Exposition.—St. Augustine says: "Is it because when the Paraclete came, the Spirit of Truth, He by more manifest testimony convicted them that they had seen and hated? Nay, but even some of them that saw, and as yet hated, He, by manifestation of Himself, convicted to the faith which worketh by love. That we may thus understand it, we recall to mind that thus it came to pass. Namely, on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit came upon the hundred and twenty assembled persons, among whom were all the Apostles; and when these, filled with the Spirit, spake with tongues of all nations, many of those who had hated, astounded by so great a miracle (while in Peter's speaking they saw so mighty and divine a testimony borne concerning Christ,

that He, Whom having put to death, they counted among the dead, was proved to have risen again and to be alive), being pricked in heart, they were converted and received pardon for that so precious Blood, by them so impiously and heinously shed, themselves redeemed by the very Blood which they had shed. For Christ's Blood was so shed for redemption of all sins, that it had power to blot out the very sin by which it was shed."

And again, upon the next verse: "*Ye shall bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning.* For because ye have been with me from the beginning, ye are able to preach that which ye know: and that ye do not this now, is because that Spirit's fulness is not yet with you. *He then shall bear witness of me, and ye shall bear it;* for to give you confidence to bear witness, there shall be the love of God shed abroad in your hearts by the Holy Spirit, Which shall be given you. Which truly was lacking yet to Peter, when, frightened by the question of the woman-servant, he had not power to bear true witness; but contrary to his own eager promising, was by great fear compelled thrice to deny Him. Howbeit, then his love was still weak and straitened, until the Holy Spirit should strengthen and enlarge it. Which Spirit, when It was by abundance of

larger grace infused into him, did so set on fire his once cold breast to bear witness of Christ, and so unlocked those aforetime trembling lips which had suppressed the truth, that, while all on whom the Holy Spirit came spake with tongues of all nations, among the crowds of Jews that stood around, he alone more promptly than the rest, put himself forward to bear witness of Christ, and by testifying of His resurrection confounded His slayers."

Isaac Williams comments as follows: "The Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, is the great Witness, and He in you, and you in Him, shall bear testimony of me; and that shall ye do even unto death, and shall stand pre-eminent in this name, as martyrs, that is, witnesses, even unto the end. Ye are yourselves especially chosen of me for this purpose; and this is what the Holy Ghost will require in filling up the number of the Twelve, that there shall be one who shall bear this witness of my ministry, from having been with us from the preaching of John till the time of my being taken up into heaven. *And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.*"

Of the words, "The Spirit of Truth Which proceedeth from the Father," Theophylact says:

"Elsewhere He says that the Father sends the Spirit: now He says that He sends Him: *Whom I will send unto you*; thus declaring the equality of the Father and the Son. That He might not be thought, however, to be opposed to the Father, to be another and rival source, as it were, of the Spirit, He adds, *From the Father*; that is, the Father agreeing, and taking an equal part in sending Him. When it is said that He proceedeth, do not understand His procession to be an external mission, such as is given to ministering spirits, but a certain peculiar, and distinct procession, such as is true of the Holy Spirit alone. To proceed is not the same as being sent, but is the essential nature of the Holy Ghost, as coming from the Father."

And Sadler: "Why does He mention here at all that He proceeds from the Father? Evidently to emphasize the independence of the witness of the Spirit to Him. By saying that He Who will testify of Him proceeds from the Father, He means to assert that the Spirit will testify of the mind and will of the Father respecting Jesus, and so will effectually disprove the calumny of the Jews that the God of Israel was opposed to the mission and claims of Jesus."

First Thought.—It is certain that the Holy Ghost has from the first wonderfully witnessed in His own way to our Lord, and continues to do so. There is His witness in the Holy Scripture; the Bible remains unique in literature, with inexhaustible staying power for every generation of the faithful. There is the Church in her indefectible existence, often failing apparently through the unfaithfulness of her members, yet ever rising again, always imperishable. There is the spiritual force which men cannot fail to recognize in many Christian lives in all ages, a force which defies analysis, yet produces saints, and martyrs, and unselfish ones, of utterly unworldly type, though sane and simple and lovable.

Yet it ought to put us to shame to think how feeble the witness of the Spirit to Christ is in our own lives. We cannot fancy that we manifest to the world any large measure of spirituality. Nor can we say that there is much of spiritual reality in the inner places of our souls, though outwardly we be scrupulously devout. It is certain that the sense of sacramental strength is very slight in us ordinarily. In theory we ought to be full of supernatural power and love, as a matter of fact we perceive little or no fruit within our lives as the result

of our frequent communions, our systematic confessions.

This is not due to any lack of readiness on the part of the divine Spirit to testify of Christ within us, but to our own lack of correspondence to His working.

1. We do not try to detach ourselves from earthly things. We continue to be greatly swayed by temporal ambitions, to be deeply affected by temporal anxieties. Most Christians apparently make no serious effort to live in heart and mind on high, not in the present life.

2. And which of us really hungers and thirsts after the divine things? How much do we care about our communions? Our zeal in preparation for them and the heartiness of our thanksgiving after them may make this plain to us. How eager are we to pray, to meditate, to be alone with God in the silence of the night? The Spirit cannot testify of Christ within our lives because we do not strive with any real effort to be spiritually-minded.

Second Thought.—Nor is it enough that we be spiritually-minded in order to bear witness effectually to the truth. Of course we cannot bear worthy witness if we are ourselves disloyal to the Master; but in addition to our personal

loyalty we must also be with our Lord from the beginning if we would testify of Him.

Nothing is more characteristic of Christ's religion than the way in which it harks back always to the starting point. Unlike the things of this world it can never develop away from its first principles. He had associated the Twelve with Him from the very first, and little by little had caused them to be built up in His doctrine as they were able to bear it. If we would be good witnesses on His behalf we must be ever going back to the beginnings of His revelation of His gracious purpose for us.

1. In the beginning of the universe the creation and ultimate glory of the human race was fore-ordained in the divine counsels. We cannot truly declare God's work on our behalf if we leave out the divine predestination.

2. In the beginning of the dispensation of grace the divine Word became incarnate. No presentation of the Gospel can be adequate which does not build up all upon the fact of the Incarnation.

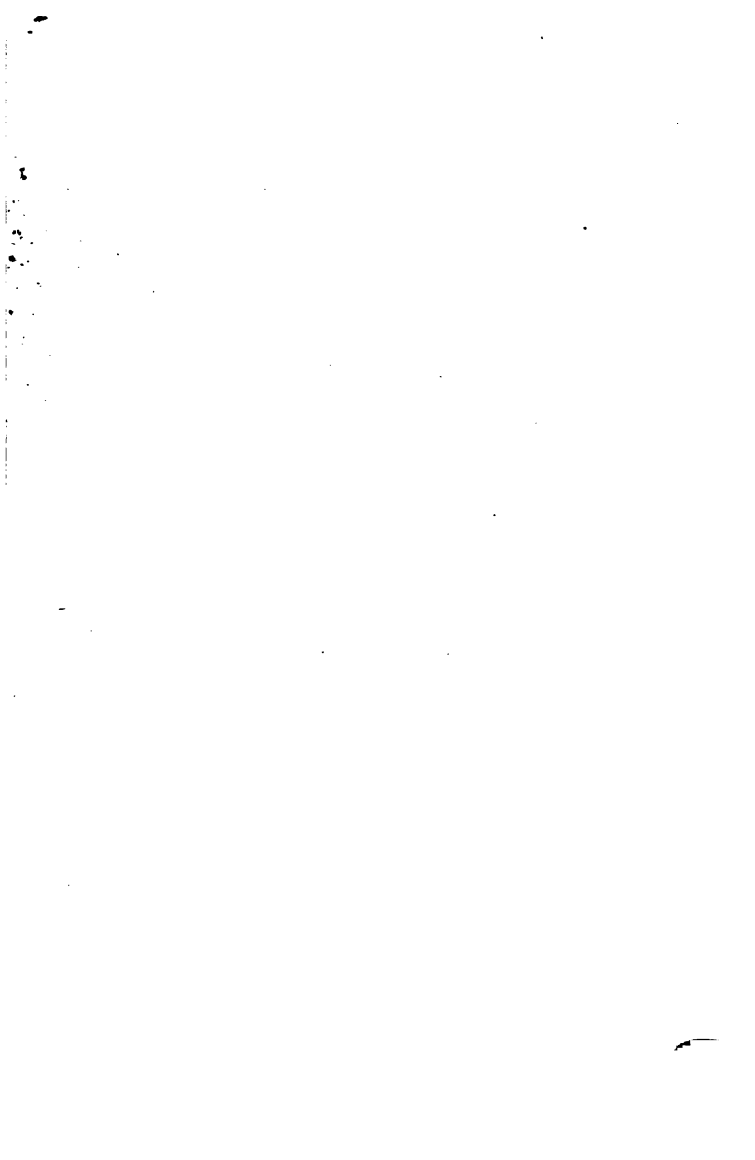
3. In the beginning of the life of the Church upon earth, the fulness of the divine power to minister grace to men was lodged in the Apostolic company by our Lord Himself. There can never be any other well-spring of truth or grace

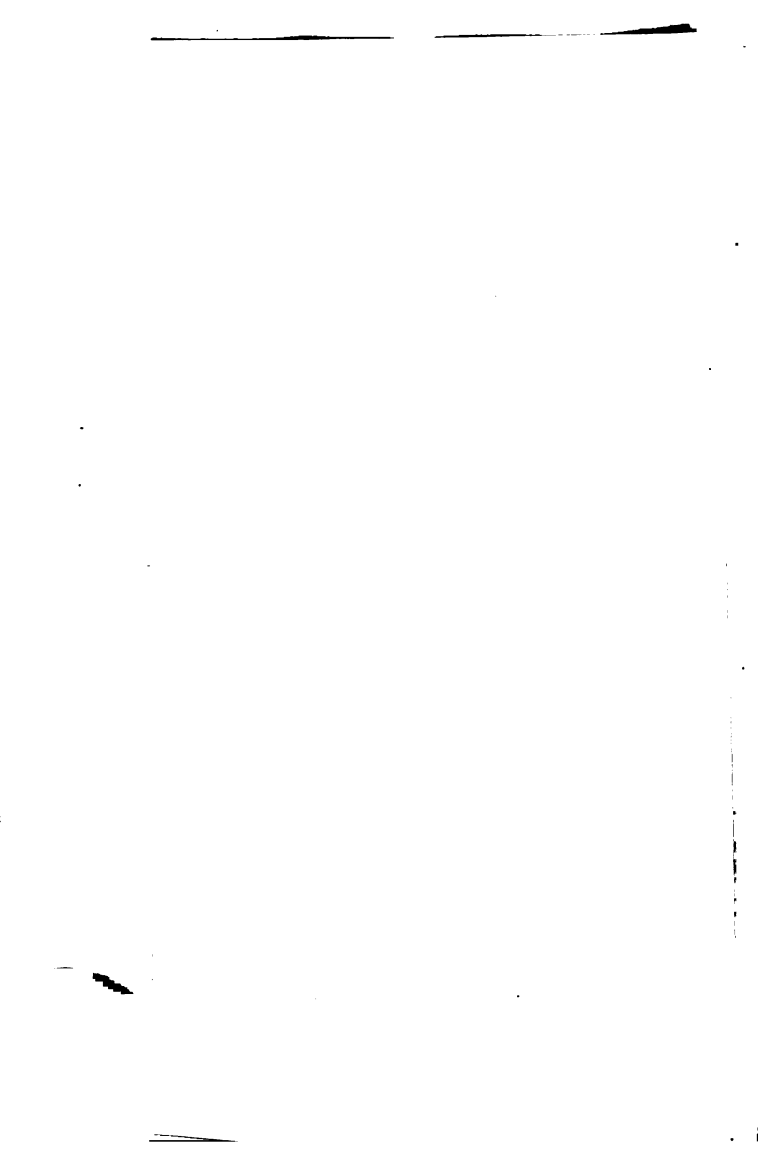
in the world save that Apostolic company. Therefore we can never bear true witness to our Lord except we insist uncompromisingly upon the Apostolical tradition.

Third Thought.—It would profit us little to be good witnesses on Christ's behalf to the world, if we should not be also witnessing before the heavenly company to His work in our own souls. The essential feature in this witnessing likewise is that we remain with Him as from the beginning. It is His will to take our lives up into union with His own in the very beginning of our stay upon the earth.

The Church has no more glorious doctrine than that of the Baptism of Infants, and that Baptism means regeneration. It is the Lord's good pleasure that by means of our Baptism all of us be with Him from the beginning even to the end of our earthly lives. Unhappily it is possible to fall from that condition of blessedness into which we were brought at the beginning, through wilful sin. The state of grace is being with Him; but if we fall from that state of grace we cease to be with Him, and such a fall is far more deplorable than any lapse into grievous sin on the part of a non-Christian, because the non-Christian has not been with the Lord from the beginning.

Nothing should be of so great importance to us as the continuance of our souls in the state of grace. We must be tempted, indeed, for the establishing of our wills in loyalty to Christ through probation, but if we remain in Christ we are well able to meet every temptation which can come upon us, and there is very gracious readiness on His part to receive back again through repentance everyone who has fallen. After probation is ended, it is His will to bring His loyal ones through purgatory to that glory which He in the beginning purposed for them.





RITCHIE, Arthur

Spiritual studies in St.
John's Gospel.

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